

A GHOST STORY.

One of the best authenticated ghost Stories in circulation is given in Beaumont's *World of Spirits*.

It is dated in the year 1662, and it relates to an apparition seen by the daughter of Sir Charles Lee, immediately preceding her death. No reasonable doubt can be placed on the authenticity of the narrative, as it was drawn up by the Bishop of Gloucester, from the recital of the young lady's father.

"Sir Charles Lee, by his first lady, had only one daughter, of which she died in child-birth; and when she was dead, her sister, the lady Everard, desired to have the education of the child, and she was by her very well educated, till she was marriageable, and a match was concluded for her with Sir William Perkins, but was then prevented in an extraordinary manner. Upon a Thursday night, thinking she saw a light in her chamber after she was in bed, she knocked for her maid, who presently came to her and was asked why she left a candle burning in her chamber? The maid said she left none, and there was none but what she brought with her at that time; then she said it was the fire, but that, her maid told her, was quite out: and said she believed it was only a dream; whereupon she said it might be so, and composed herself again to sleep. But about two o'clock she was awakened again, and saw the apparition of a little woman between her curtain and her pillow, who told her that she was her mother and that she was happy, and that by twelve of the clock that day she should be with her. Whereupon she knocked again for her maid, called for her clothes, and when she was dressed, went into her closet, and came not out again till nine, and then brought with her a letter sealed to her father; and brought it to her aunt, the Lady Everard, told her what had happened, and declared that as soon as she was dead, it might be sent to him. The lady thought she was suddenly fallen mad, and thereupon sent presently away to Chelmsford for a physician and surgeon, who both came immediately; but the physician could discern no indication of what the lady imagined, or of any indisposition of her body; notwithstanding the lady would needs have her let blood, which was done accordingly. And when the young woman had patiently let them do what they would with her, she desired that the chaplain might be called to read prayers; and when prayers were ended, she took her guitar and psalm book, and sat down upon a chair without arms, and played and sung so melodiously and admirably, that her music master, who was then there, admired at it. And near the stroke of twelve, she rose and sate herself down in a great chair with arms, and presently fetched a strong breathing or two, immediately expired, and was so suddenly cold, as was much wondered at by the physician and surgeon. She died in Waltham, in Essex, three miles from Chelmsford, and the letter was sent to Sir Charles, at his house in Warwickshire, but he was so afflicted with the death of his daughter, that he came not till she was buried; but when he came, he caused her to be taken up, and to be buried with her mother at Edmonton, as she desired in her letter.

A VOICE FROM THE GRAVE.

We proposed, in our last number to give some extracts from sermons preached to the young, in Boston, a century ago. We shall insert a few paragraphs from the discourses of the Rev. Messrs. WADSWORTH and FOXCROFT, joint pastors of the old Church, which now meets in Summer-Street. THEY BEING DEAD YET SPEAK.

[From the Sermon of Rev. Mr. WADSWORTH.]

If young persons would rightly fear God, they should diligently study His will, to direct them in it, and quicken them to it : For His revealed will, shows what He forbids, what He requires, and what obligations they are under to obey Him. He has shown them what is good, and what He requires of them, (Mic. vi. 8.) this He has done in the holy Scriptures, which are able to make wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus, (2 Tim. iii. 15.) Timothy in early life knew those Scriptures, and so should others also. The Scriptures are God's law, they are Christ's love-letter to His people, they are the saint's charter containing the privileges belonging to them : youth should maintain a diligent, constant practice of reading the holy Scriptures ; of regarding them as the light of their feet, and lamp of their paths, (Psalm cxix. 105.) Search the Scriptures, (John v. 39.) Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly. Meditate on God's Law, night and day, (Psalm i. 2.) Hide it in your hearts, that you may not sin against God : Wherewith shall a

young man cleanse his way? By taking heed thereto according to thy word, (Psalm cxix. 9. 11.) Dear Youth, you cannot rightly fear and serve God, unless you are acquainted with His revealed Will. You must know His will, else you cannot do it; what He *forbids*, that you may *avoid* it; what He *requires*, that you may *perform* it. Study to know God's will, both as a part and a means, of that fear you owe Him: as a part of it, for it is what He requires. (1 Chron. xxviii. 9.) Know thou the God of thy fathers, (Rom. xii. 2.) That ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable will of God. (Hos. iv. 6.) My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge; because thou hast rejected knowledge, I also will reject thee. Again, study God's will, as a means of that fear you owe Him. Practice is the end that should be aimed at in seeking knowledge. We should study to know God's holy will, with a purpose, desire and design to do it, to conform to it. (Josh. i. 8.) This Book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth, but thou shalt meditate therein day and night; that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein. (Matt. xxviii. 20.) Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you. The commands of Christ should be taught, and therefore learnt, that they may be observed and obeyed. Therefore, my youthful friends, prize your Bible as the best of all books; prize it above gold, above much fine gold, esteem it sweeter than honey or the honey comb, (Psalm xix. 10.) It shows you how to get peace with God, how to please Him, how to honour Christ and to get honour in His sight; it shows you how to get pardon of sin, how to behave yourselves in every station and condition, how to get a sanctified use of providences, how to save your souls, to escape hell, to get to heaven, and possess eternal glory. O let this best of books, be the chief subject of your study and meditation. How much time is wretchedly mispent, thrown away. lost, in reading useless, or worse than useless books. But seriously and diligently to read and study the holy Bible, is one good means to make us wise to salvation, holy in time and happy to eternity.

[From the Sermon of Rev. Mr. Foxcroft.]

The first sort of young persons to be exhorted are the habitually **SECURE** and insensible. Too many, I am afraid, there are of this unhappy character among our young people, as well as elder, notwithstanding the repeated solemn calls, warnings and exhortations they have had from time to time. Therefore there is need of this address to the secure. And O that we might succeed in these our last attempts!

Let every unconcerned unconvinced young man now before the Lord, consider I am particularly speaking to him, in the name of God, that God who searches the heart, who expects you take heed how you hear, and will one day call you to an account: in His great and dreadful name, I say, I am now speaking to you. O consider this young men, and dare not turn away your ear, nor harden your heart: but hearken unto the voice of God, and see that ye refuse not Him that speaketh from heaven. Harken to the counsel which is brought you, and send us not back to our Master with that melancholy complaint,—Who hath believed our report? We have laboured in vain.—Yet, be it so, our judgment is with the Lord and our reward with God!

But what arguments and expressions shall I choose? O that I might be directed to such, as shall affect and penetrate deep! God is our witness, whom we serve in the Gospel of His Son, that our heart's desire and prayer for you all is, that you may be saved. "Now, therefore, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God! and as workers together with Him we beseech you, that ye receive not the Gospel of God in vain." In the bowels of Jesus, and by all the compassion you owe to your perishing souls, we beg you, yea we command and exhort you by our Lord Jesus Christ, that you now, even now begin to consider your ways.

I. Then, Consider the great sinfulness of your present security. Great is your wickedness herein: your guilt is very obvious and prodigious. Your carnal security implies the blackest ingratitude, the basest disingenuity, the vilest injustice, rebellion and presumption. It betrays a secret infidelity, and proceeds from accursed principles. It is a manifest disobedience to the preceptive will of

God. It is slighting the threatenings of His law, a contemning the promises of His Gospel; and opposing the gracious designs of His word and ordinances and providences. It is a high contempt cast on the blessed God; it is a dishonourable reflection on His wisdom and love in Christ; it is a reproaching His justice, holiness and truth; it is a defiance of His infinite power; an abuse of His mercy, and a mocking of His patience! it is an insolent spurning at His favour, neglecting His service, misemploying the time and talents He has given you, and preferring the devil before Him. Further, it is a denying the Lord that bought you, and trampling under foot the Son of God. It is also a resisting the Holy Ghost and doing despite to the Spirit of Grace.

Your security then is a heinous iniquity. And what is an unspeakable aggravation hereof, it immoveably fastens upon you the guilt of all your other sins. O secure young man, labour to see what horrible guilt lies upon you! And let the time past suffice to have been spent in this dreadful wickedness. Now awake to righteousness and sin not.

II. Consider the absolute inexcusableness of your sinful security. You have no plea in the world to cover your guilt. Your security is wilful and chosen. It is against many calls and cautions both in the word and providence of God; you cannot therefore plead, you have not been duly warned and called: God and men are witnesses to this. You cannot plead invincible ignorance of the way of salvation, the necessity of conversion, the need of convictions, and the methods in order hereto: for light has come into the world, and you choose darkness. You cannot plead insuperable difficulties in the way: for Grace is offered, Grace sufficient; and you refuse it. You cannot pretend want of encouragement; for great and precious promises are set before you. You cannot pretend want of helps to assist you; for you have all needful means of conviction and awakening. You cannot have the face to pretend want of leisure; that you have no time to attend the necessary care of your soul; being engaged in other matters of higher importance; for there is nothing of equal or comparable moment with that: or being as a servant in a continual hurry of care and employment, and not at your own disposal: for you may,

you should in this case, redeem time from your bed and table, and otherwise ; as knowing you have a Master in heaven whose service must not be dispensed with on any score whatever. You cannot be so absurd as to pretend any unfitness of the present time, or say that you are too young, to concern yourself about the grave matters of religion : for that which is at all times your indispensable duty, and so necessary to your present, as well as future, safety and comfort, cannot be begun too soon. Besides, how many others no fitter by nature nor riper in years than you, have early sought and aright improved convictions, to their saving repentance ? What then will you say, when God shall arise ? How wilt thou answer it, O young man, when God shall bring thee into judgment, that thou hast not remembered thy Creator in the days of thy youth, but walked in the ways of thine own heart, and in the sight of thine eyes ? Verily you have no cloak for your sin. Every mouth shall be stopped. Behold heaven, earth, and hell shall bear record against you ; yea your conscience will be instead of a thousand witnesses, and strike you into silence and confusion. “ Whoever remains graceless in the day of grace, will be found speechless in the day of judgment.”

(Recreative Review.)

GHOSTS.

WE hope our readers will not say that we are absolutely bewitched in bringing forward such an article as this in so incredulous an age. Certainly we have not the least objection to people arguing themselves out of superstitious habits of believing what the best authors and historians have, in the most solemn manner, related to us; still we must do our duty by presenting such to their observations. Some credulous people have been apt to entertain an opinion of Xenophon, Thucydides, Livy, Tacitus, and the like. But Tom Thumb is a fiction, so is Orlando; the seven champions is no better, and there's little more to be said for Bevis of Southampton. Therefore, the Greek and Latin historians may be all swept as rubbish out of libraries, or else set upon the same shelves with the others, as being of equal credit and authority with them: And it would be pleasant to see Orlando and Herodotus, Xenophon and St. George, Tom Thumb and Tacitus, Diodorus Siculus and the Three Children in the Wood, set by one another. But it is to be supposed they do actually stand together in your studies. Now there having been an astonishing confederacy amongst several sorts of mechanics or tradesmen to keep up the belief of ghosts or apparitions, whose trades are in a great measure supported by this very fear of hobgoblins, we are the more obliged to go into this subject, quoting authorities; for if they are correct in this, then we are otherwise; if incorrect in thus getting their living by these by-roads, then they should be exposed. There is little doubt also that they invent stories of ghosts, noises, scratchings, odd appearances, un-

accountable somethings, to amuse, or to frighten people with, not scrupling to mention even time and place where such and such apparitions have been seen. This, it seems too, has been a practice amongst them ever since the time of Constantine the Great, and earlier too. But to the point: the trades more immediately concerned in this plot, are booksellers, shoe-makers, and tallow-chandlers, and by inference printers, stationers, type-founders, leather-sellers, and butchers, are accessaries, are therefore equally guilty, if it be guilt. First, as to the booksellers, those midwives of muses and of ghosts; why, a well-selected collection of strange and wonderful accounts makes a good copyright, and furnishes a very decent annuity. We have heard of one who purchased a small estate out of a little successful book of apparitions which passed through 39 editions; in memory of which the grateful bookseller hung up the picture of a ghost walking in a church-yard, for his sign, and had the devil engraved upon his seal for his coat of arms. Nothing sells a magazine better than such stories, as Mr. Blackwood knows, who has lately taken to raking up those very old affairs written by Matthew Paris, who, as some people think, should be quoted in any thing but this. As to the inferior class of the trade, it is said that they maintain a correspondence in all parts of the country, to give them notice of every odd thing that happens, which is capable of improvement, or in other words, worked up into a good plausible story of ghosts or hobgoblins. The prices given are proportional to the probable value and success of the stories which they purchase; so that

perhaps 20 or 30 guineas will be promptly paid for the materials for a neat clever story, in which strange scenes of noises, voices, and visions are artfully connected and set together. Another such ghost story (said to be *done* by De Foe) as is prefixed to Drelincourt's *Reflections on Death*, would be worth full 500*l.* and we are surprised not to have had, in this age of genius a new one. Some of the proprietors of weekly number publications have had vast collections of these relations by them, which, for the most part are reckoned as good as old gold, and we have heard that one of the prime hands in this way paid his daughter's portion of 3000*l.* in manuscripts of apparitions and haunted houses, which her husband, one of the same trade, was as well pleased with as ready money. Just like the Stocks, the value of these depends upon the season. When the dark nights come on, and servant girls, fools, and children are most afraid, this sort of stock rises. With respect to the shoemakers, it is natural they should wish people to wear out their shoes as fast as possible, and in order to this, 'tis a very natural step to fudge up an ill report of certain church-yards and burying grounds, as places said to be haunted. Abundance of people choose, therefore, to take a compass of 3 or 4 miles round about, rather than go through the church yard, where they might see something in a white sheet, and consequently be frightened. In the country, they will even go through thick and thin, muddy lanes and splashy grounds, to avoid such ordeals, sacrificing soal-leather to soul-fear; sometimes, they will even leave both shoes sticking in the mud behind them if they hear a noise near a church-yard that may not be accounted for, so that it is manifestly the interest of the shoemaker to pretend to believe in the existence of ghosts. What a world of shoes were worn out tramping after the Cock-lane ghost, that deceived the great Dr. Johnson, and the Tiverton ghost of more recent days, that deceived a reverend divine; these are the golden days of Crispin. With regard to the tallow-chandlers,

they have wisely considered that many hundred dozen of candles would be used more in a year, if notions were put in people's heads, which would make them afraid of going to bed in the dark. And hence, these gentlemen have buzzed about shocking stories of people being pulled by the leg just as they are stepping into bed by invisible wicked angels, who will do any thing in the dark. But more especially is this rivetted upon the attention of children, whom you may sooner persuade to go to bed without a supper than without a candle. In rich families the chandlers fare well this way. They cannot go to bed without candles 4 to the pound; nay some even have wax, upon pretence forsooth that there are some hobgoblins that don't value the dull light of twelves or fourteens, and therefore will not fail to come and play their tricks unless there's a good light. The names of some of these hobgoblins are—blue devils! acting under a field-marshal general, Ennui. But as to the chandlers, they even have authority for their belief. Do not wax candles (or tallow if wax cannot be offered) drive the devil away? Go to the Romish chapels where they burn such by day light; that is the reason; and there are some churches on the Continent where candles are continually burning, no doubt to the great benefit of the souls and bodies of the chandlers.—but to leave all waggery, and be more serious, we have some wonderful attestations as to the reality of ghosts, that is, that such things *were*: *now*, thank heaven, they are all laid in the Red Sea, the usual place assigned to sprites.

Luther, in his '*Colloquia Mensalia*,' says, "when I lived at Zurica, in Franconia, a child that could hardly speak or walk was got into a wood near the house, (there are forests every where in that country) an unexpected snow covering and altering the surface of the ground, the child could not find the way back again to the house. The snow continuing to fall in great abundance, he remained there covered over with it two days and three nights. During that time an unknown man brought him meat and drink; but at

the beginning of the third day, he led the child near his father's house, and there left him. *I was present* when he came in, and I protest he told all that had happened to him, as clearly and in as good terms as I could have done myself; notwithstanding from that time for three whole years, he was not capable of putting any words together, that one could easily understand. I am therefore persuaded (adds Luther) that the man that preserved him was a good angel."

At a town in the west of England was held a club of twenty-four people, which assembled once a week to drink punch, smoke tobacco, and talk politics. Like Rubens' academy at Antwerp, each had his particular chair, and the president's was more exalted than the rest. One of the members had been in a dying state for some time; of course, his chair, while he was absent, remained vacant. The club being met on their usual night, enquiries were naturally made after their associate. As he lived in an adjoining house, a particular friend went himself to enquire for him, and returned with the dismal tidings that he could not possibly survive the night. This threw a gloom on the company, and all efforts to turn the conversation from the sad subject before them were ineffectual. About midnight (the time by long prescription appropriated for the walking of spectres) the door opened—and the form, in white, of the dying, or rather dead man, walked into the room, and took his seat in the accustomed chair—there he remained in silence, and in silence was he gazed at: the apparition continued a sufficient time in the chair to assure all present of the reality of the vision; at length he arose and stalked towards the door, which he opened, as if living—went out, and then shut the door after him. After a long pause, some one at last had the resolution to say, "If only *one* of us had seen this, he would not have been believed, but it is impossible so many persons can be deceived. The company, by degrees, recovered their speech; and the whole conversation, as may be imagined was upon the dreadful object which had engaged their attention.

They broke up and went home. In the morning enquiry was made after their sick friend: it was answered by an account of his death which happened nearly at the time of his appearing in the club. There could be little doubt before; but now, nothing could be more certain than the reality of the apparition, which had been seen by so many persons together. It is needless to say, that such a story spread over the country, and found credit even from infidels: for in this case, all reasoning becomes superfluous, when opposed to a plain fact, attested by three and twenty witnesses. To assert the doctrine of the fixed laws of nature was ridiculous, when there were so many people of credit to prove that they might be unfixed. Years rolled on and the story ceased to engage attention, and it was forgotten, unless when occasionally produced to silence an unbeliever. One of the club was an apothecary. In the course of his practice he was called to an old woman whose profession was attending on sick persons. She told him, that she could leave the world with a quiet conscience, but for one thing which lay on her mind. "Do you not remember Mr. ***** whose ghost has been so much talked about? I was his nurse. The night he died I left the room for something I wanted—I am sure I had not been absent long; but at my return I found the bed without my patient. He was delirious, and I feared that he had thrown himself out of the window. I was so frightened that I had no power to stir; but after some time, to my great astonishment, he entered the room shivering, and his teeth chattering—laid down on the bed, and died. Considering myself as the cause of his death, I kept this a secret, for fear of what might be done to me. Though I could contradict all the story of the ghost, I dared not do it. I knew by what had happened that it was *he himself* who had been in the club-room (perhaps recollecting that it was the night of meeting,) but I hope God and the poor gentleman's friends will forgive me, and I shall die contented."

A Real Ghost.—The following extraordinary affair happened at Ferry-

bridge in 1767. The wife of one Thomas Benson being suddenly taken ill, she, to all appearance expired, and continued without any symptoms of life the whole day, and every proper requisite was ordered for her funeral; but the husband hoping for consolation in his distress, by some money which he had reason to believe she had secreted from him in her life-time, began a rummage for it, and found seven pounds ten shillings in crown pieces, concealed in an old box; but, upon his attempting to take it away, he was surprised by his wife, who was just then recovered, met him, and terribly frightened him, by appearing as if nothing had happened.—(*Dodsley*, 1767.)

Mr. John Wesley was remarkably superstitious this way; the earlier volumes of the *Arminian Magazine*, done especially under his own eye, are full of the most appalling, but incredibly fanciful stories. There is as well-authenticated ghost story as the most superstitious could desire to read, in *Southey's Life of Wesley*. Jeffery, the ghost, played a very noisy part, beginning December 2, and ending at the close of January.

A Real Ghost.—The following story was communicated by M. Bertin himself to the Duchess de Choiseul, as it happened to himself. Wishing to see his native country (Perigord) from which he had been long absent, he went to pay a visit to one of his old friends, whom he had not heard from for more than a year. Upon his arrival at the house, he was received by the son of his friend, who told him that his father had been dead about a year. Though he was struck with the news, which was so unexpected, it did not prevent him from going in. He conversed with the son upon the state of his affairs, and frequently interrupted the conversation to regret the loss of his old friend. At night he was conducted to his apartment, which he found to be the same as the deceased had occupied. The circumstance contributed not a little to keep alive his sorrow, and to prevent him from sleeping. He continued awake till two o'clock in the morning, when he heard the door of his chamber open; and by

the feeble glimmering of a night-lamp, and of the fire, which was still burning, he perceived the figure of a very old man, pale, wan, and excessively thin, with a long dirty beard, who, shivering with cold, was walking on slowly towards the chimney. When he was near the fire, he seemed to warm himself eagerly, saying, "Ah! it is a long time since I saw the fire." In his voice, figure, and manner, M. Bertin, who was seized with terror, thought he recognized his old friend, the master of the house. He was neither able to speak to him nor to leave the bed; when the old man, turning towards the bed and sighing, said, 'Ah! how many nights have I passed without going to bed,' and as he said it, he came forward, in order to throw himself upon it. The terror which M. Bertin felt, made him leap out precipitately, crying, 'Who are you? what do you want?' On hearing his voice the old man looked at him with astonishment, and immediately knew him. 'What do I see, (cried he) M. Bertin, my old friend Bertin!' 'And who then are you?' cried M. Bertin. The old man mentioned his name; and the other, gradually recovering from his fright, learnt with horror that his friend had been confined a year in one of the vaults of the castle by his son (assisted by a servant that daily brought him food), who had given it out that his father was dead, in order, that he might get possession of his property. On that very day, as he afterwards learnt, the arrival of M. Bertin, who was not expected, having thrown the house into confusion, the servant who carried provisions to the unfortunate old man, had not properly fastened the door of the cell when he went away, and the latter perceiving it, waited till all was quiet in the castle, and under cover of the night endeavoured to escape, but not finding the keys in the outer door, he naturally took the way to his apartment, which, though in the dark, he readily found. M. Bertin called up his servant without loss of time; said he wished to set off immediately without waking the master of the castle; and took the old man with him to Périgueux, where they arrived at day-

break. Proper officers were directly dispatched to arrest the ungrateful son ; by being shut up, during the remainder of his life, in the same cell in which he who suffered what his crime deserved, had confined his father.

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POPULAR TALES.

FROM THE FRENCH, GERMAN, ITALIAN,
SPANISH, AND ENGLISH.

Truth severe, by fiction dressed.—GRAY.

GHOST OF MY UNCLE.

I AROSE early in the morning, and after taking a good breakfast, set out from home. A quantity of rain had fallen in the night. It was, however, fair when I commenced my expedition, and I wished it so to remain. The morning was still and beautiful; it was at the early hour of four; I could not yet distinguish the sun, though I was sensible he had left his ocean bed from the beautiful streaks of colouring in the eastern sky. To express the softness, mildness, and calmness of the scenery, at that hour, I cannot find adequate words: those only can conceive it who have witnessed the scene. I had not proceeded more than two miles, before a few drops alarmed me with apprehension of a soaking shower, from a heavy black cloud that was slowly sailing over my head, and my fears were soon realized by a very thick descent that followed, on which I betook myself with all speed to a thatched cottage, that I saw at some distance, for shelter.

Many years had elapsed since I had wandered about in this spot in careless infancy, and the pretty secluded cot to which I was advancing, had been my home. I looked around on the hills and dales, and could easily recognise them as my old acquaintances. "Ha" said I, "ye change not your appearance, ye grow not old in the course of time, the feebleness of age cometh not upon you;—ye still smile in the brightness of summer, and frown in the lowering winter. For ages ye have reared your towering crests, and given food to the flocks and the herds that have chequered your dark surface; ye have given a direction to the murmuring brook that proceeds from you, till it seeks, far distant, the mighty ocean; and while generation after generation hath passed away, ye have preserved unvaried the features ye possessed in ages gone—Even now, as in years past, my eyes behold the still sunshine sleeping upon your gentle

sloping declivities, interrupted only when the light cloud of spring, for a moment, casts over them its passing shadow! My cogitations were suddenly interrupted by the gate at the end of the pasture, which I opened. In another moment I was in the porch of the cottage; I lifted the latch, and went in. The house appeared just the same as I had left it ten years before. The furniture was the same, and each piece occupied the same position. The old clock stood ticking in the corner, as it had done for four-score years, the oaken settle remained behind the door, and my uncle's antique two armed chair by the fire-side; but I saw no living creature in the house besides the cat on the hearthstone. I listened awhile, but could hear nothing. At this I rather wondered, as of yore the house was seldom, scarcely ever, totally deserted. I then went forward into the spence, or country parlour, where I found several neighbour cousins and the servants, all standing in deep silence around the bed of my dying uncle.

On entering, all eyes turned upon me; I was a stranger to most of them; there were, however, one or two who remembered me. I advanced to the bed-side, and the countenance of my uncle for a moment brightened up at my approach, but soon subsided again into a cold tranquil indifference. It was plain that death was rapidly approaching. He had been speechless several hours: consequently we could hold no conversation. He, however, put out his hand, which I grasped with an affection redoubled by the prospect of soon losing him for ever. In my younger days I had lived with him, and he having no children of his own, was then remarkably fond of me; subsequently that affection was strengthened between us, and although circumstances had cast my lot in another country, yet we had kept up a friendly and affectionate intercourse. Some time previous to his indisposition, I had again removed to within thirty miles of his residence, which was the place from whence I set out on this sorrowful visit.

My uncle was a man of sound judgment, keen observation, and cheerful social disposition, joined to a thorough knowledge of mankind; he possessed a good portion of

eccentricity and humour. He loved a cheerful glass; he was kind to his servants and dependants, and though rather of a frugal and saving disposition, yet he was charitable to his poor neighbours. In his friendships he was rather capricious, but firm in his attachment to the kirk and government of his country. He was apt to be a little passionate and hasty in his temper; but his resentment was seldom of long duration. He was well beloved by those among whom he dwelt, and might be pronounced a good neighbour, and an excellent subject. By a long course of industry in his profession, he had amassed a pretty good property, the knowledge of which had drawn around him a host of needy relations, who besieged him with flattery and professions, but whose attentions were chiefly drawn forth by their hopes of inheriting the old man's property. How he had willed it was not known. He was a man of prudence, and seldom blabbed out his private affairs.

On my arrival, I found all the friends about him remarkably attentive and dutiful in their behaviour, though it was evident that a good deal of the affection was assumed. Shortly after, he fell into a kind of a doze, and all left the room save an attendant or two. Peggy, the servant who had lived with my uncle fourteen years, now insisted on my taking some refreshment. But I was too much agitated to feel any thing like pleasure in my repast, and what I ate was more to please the faithful old domestic, than from any inclination of my own. When my slight meal was over, I got up and went to the window in a serious and reflecting mood. The afternoon was far advanced, and the scenery without was wrapped in tranquillity. I was soon summoned from my station to the parlour. My uncle had somewhat revived, and his speech had returned. He told us death was making rapid advances, and that we might soon expect the moment of his dissolution. He informed us where we should find his will, and gave us some excellent advice on our future conduct.

Some things he requested us to perform, which I thought were a little odd. He wished us to read his will in the room where he was, immediately after he had expired. He desired that he might not be laid out, as it is commonly called, until at least twelve hours after his departure; that his large two armed oaken chair might be placed in all order and solemnity at the head of the table every meal, and that it should remain unoccupied till after his funeral. He also wished to be interred in a very deep grave. All these requests we promised faithfully to observe, when, after taking an affectionate farewell of each, he quietly resigned himself to his pillow: his breathing became more

and more faint, till at last we could perceive it no more.

During these transactions my mind was in a state I cannot well describe: my thoughts were all confusion, while at the same time I struggled to be calm and composed. Poignant as were my feelings, I gazed on my dying relative with a sort of apathy and grief, and at the moment when nature was yielding up the contest I could not shed a tear. In a short time all quitted the apartment, and I was left alone. The branches of the huge elm trees, with their thickening foliage, partially screening the window, made it, under such circumstances, awfully gloomy and tranquil. I took several turns about the room, and with a soft step I approached the bed, gazed a moment, turned away, and then going up to the window, strove to divert my thoughts by looking at the surrounding landscape. Twilight was descending, and the sober hues of evening gradually enveloped the lofty hills. No sound struck my ear, except the faint and low murmurs of the brook, which brawled down the valley at the bottom of the Flinty Knowe—the shout, softened by distance, of the peasant committing his herds to the pasture—and now and then the solitary barking of a shepherd's dog among the echoing dales, attendant on his master looking out his charge for the night.

I had not stood at the casement many minutes when my cousins, all talking in a rude, noisy, and indecorous manner, came into the room with the will, which it seems they had departed in search of the moment the testator had expired. I was a good deal shocked at the frivolity they manifested, and could not help reproving them, though in a mild and gentle manner, for the little respect they paid to the deceased. "Why ye ken," said one, "he tauld us to read the will amaisht as soon as he died." "Ay," cried another, "and sae in conformity wi' his command, we went straight up the stairs and rummaged o'er his auld kist, till we found it." "Mind your ain concerns, gude man, and we'll mind ours," rejoined a third, rather gruffly; so that my well meant admonitions had no better effect than to cause me to be more disliked by the party; for I could perceive before this that they looked on me in the light of an unwelcome intruder.

The will was now read, to which all paid the greatest attention. A mute anxiety and deep interest sat on every countenance: their aspects were, however, instantly changed into those of intense disappointment and vexation, on hearing that my uncle had made a stranger, whom none of us knew, the heir of all his property, real and personal. For my part, this circumstance did not affect me in the least. I had not had any

expectation of inheriting the smallest portion; therefore could not feel disappointed. But with the others it was different; they had clung to him like so many leeches, or like the ivy to the old ruin, and with about as much affection as the two before-mentioned things have for the objects to which they so closely adhere. A most appalling and disgusting scene now took place among the disappointed legacy hunters. They abused the old man in the most shocking terms: they taxed him with injustice and villany, and even proceeded to call down imprecations upon his lifeless corse. I shuddered at the conduct of the unprincipled villains; I trembled at the impiety of men who could, at a time the most solemn and impressive to a human being, act in a manner sufficient to call down upon them immediate and divine vengeance. I was chilled with horror. I almost expected every moment to see the lifeless corse of my uncle start from the bed, on which it lay, to take vengeance on the audacious wretches. Once, indeed, I actually thought I saw his lips quiver with rage—his eyebrows knit together—and all the muscles of his countenance contract into a dreadful frown. I shuddered at the sight and withdrew my gaze.

At length they went into the kitchen, and I was once more left alone in the chamber of death. I went to the bed-side, and the scene I had just witnessed operated so forcibly on my feelings, that I burst into tears, and uttered aloud my lamentations over my lifeless relative. When this ebullition had somewhat subsided, I began to reflect a little where I was, and a sort of timidity came creeping over me. There is an undefinable apprehension which we feel while we are in company with the dead. We imagine, in spite of the efforts of reason, that the departed spirit is hovering near its former tenement. It being now quite dark, and having these feelings in a strong degree, it is no wonder that I rather preferred the company of the wretches in the kitchen, than to remain long where I was.

I accordingly proceeded thither, where I found them all carousing round a large table, on which were placed the fragments of the dinner, and plenty of liquor. I reminded them of our promise to place my uncle's old two armed chair at the head of the table, as he had requested, which they had neglected to do, and which they now strenuously opposed my doing. I was, however, resolutely determined to have it done, and at length succeeded. I then retired to the fire-side, where I sat, without taking any part in the conversation, or in any thing that passed during the whole evening. I shall pass over the several succeeding hours, the whole of which they sat drinking, till they were all in a greater or less degree in-

toxicated, and generally brawling, wrangling, and swearing in a loud and boisterous manner. The night became stormy as it advanced. The wind arose, and at intervals moaned, sighed, and whistled shrilly without, roared in the wide chimney, and as it furiously bent the trees in which the house was embosomed, made a sound similar to the dashing of the waves on the shore of the ocean. The rain fell in torrents, and the large drops pattered against the window with a ceaseless and melancholy cadence.

It was now getting nigh the "witching time of night," and I saw no signs of the revellers quitting the table. On the contrary, they grew more loud and boisterous. In obedience to their imperious commands, yet evidently with the greatest reluctance, Peggy had kept replenishing the exhausted vessels with more liquor, and their demands increased in proportion to the reluctance with which they were satisfied. At length, however, on receiving an intimation from me that I would interpose, she absolutely refused to draw any more liquor for them, telling them they had had plenty, and that it was time to retire to bed. The scene that now ensued was such as is impossible for me to describe; maddened and inflamed with rage at being thus refused, the wretches began to throw the furniture up and down the house, break the glasses and jugs, and to abuse the servant, from whom they attempted to wrest the key of the cellar, yelling out at the same time the most horrid oaths and imprecations.

The table was shortly upset, and the lights put out in the scuffle, and in a few moments we should, in all probability, have had blood shed, as I felt myself roused to a pitch of fury, and was advancing with the large heavy headed fire-poker to the assistance of the servant, who was loudly shrieking for help: just then the old clock struck twelve rapid strokes, and the bell had not ceased to vibrate, when we heard three heavy knocks, as if given by a mallet upon the wall, which separated the kitchen from the parlour where my uncle lay. There appeared to be something supernatural in this. The whole house seemed to shake to its very foundation. A deep silence ensued. I stood still. The wretches instantly became sober. We all gazed earnestly and wildly at the place from whence the noise proceeded. Scarce had we recovered from the shock, when we were again thunder-struck with a noise in the parlour; it was unlike any sound that I had ever heard before. It seemed as if all the furniture in the room was violently crashed together, mingled with the noise of fire-arms. Shrieks and exclamations burst from all.

The windows shook and every door of the habitation gave a momentary jar. I trem-

ried with awe. I felt every hair of my head bristling upwards—my knees smote against each other—a deathly paleness sat on every countenance, and all eyes were fixed in an intense gaze on the door, at the upper part of the kitchen, which led to the staircase, buttery, and parlour. When, to complete the horror of the scene, the door burst wide open—dashed against the wall, and in, gliding at a slow pace, came a dreadful apparition. Its countenance was that of death. It seemed to have been long the inhabitant of that dark and narrow house—the grave; the worms had revelled upon its eyes, and left nothing but the orbless sockets. The rest of the skeleton was enveloped in a long and white sheet. The horrid spectre advanced into the middle of the room. I involuntarily shrunk back—the heavy weapon dropped from my hand and rang loudly on the stone floor; overcome with terror, I sank into a chair. A cold sweat broke from my forehead, and I had well nigh fainted on its first appearance; the others had tumbled one over the other, in the greatest horror and confusion, and now lay as if dead in all directions.

The spectre gazed wildly round for a moment—at the clock—at the fire—and then turned its eyeless sockets upon each individual, motioning at the same time with its long arm, and pointing to the outer door, seemingly directing to an outlet for escape, and wishing for their exit. They were not long in obeying this intimation, but several crawled away on their hands and knees, with all the speed they could possibly make: none of them daring to stand upright. The spectre all the while was standing in the middle of the floor, eyeing, or rather appearing to eye them, through the void sockets, where eyes had once glistened, as they retreated one by one in the greatest fear and trepidation. When Peggy and I offered to decamp along with the rest, the spectre motioned us to remain where we were, and we durst not for our lives disobey. When the last of the crew was making his exit, and had crawled nearly to the door, the spectre, which had hitherto stood motionless, except waving its arm and slowly turning its eyeless countenance on the wretches as they crept successively out of the door, bounded with the rapidity of lightning after the terrified wretch. But swift as the flight of spirits are, in this case that of the mortal was swifter: the fellow gave a thrilling scream—made a convulsive spring—his heels struck violently against the lintel of the door in his course, and he vanished from my sight and the spectre after him. “Gude defend us,” said Peggy. “For my part, ill as I was frightened, I could scarce forbear laughing outright at the last incident so comic and farcical.”

Half a minute had not elapsed, when I heard a step, and in another instant (I still kept my eyes on the door) in came the very form of my *uncle*, muttering, “Villains! Rascals! Hypocrites!” He fastened the door after him, shut out his nephews and the spectre, and then came towards the fire. At this I was more amazed than ever. He, however, gave me to understand that he was alive and well, and that all I had seen transacted in the afternoon and evening, was nothing but a stratagem he had made use of to try the sincerity of his relations, and if he found them, as he conjectured, false in their professions, to get rid of them. The scheme answered nobly, and, it must be confessed, the stratagem was well planned and exceedingly well executed.

My uncle concluded his relation with assuring me, that, excepting a good legacy for his faithful servant Peggy, I should inherit all that he possessed, as some little acknowledgment for the fright he had caused me; and as for the wretches he had expelled from his house, in so singular a manner, they should never more cross the threshold of his door. We all three now sat down to a little supper, of which my uncle stood in great need, and after taking a cheerful glass retired to bed.

Notwithstanding the fatigue of my journey, and sitting up so late, my sleep was far from being sound and refreshing. I was disturbed with fearful dreams the whole night. At length the cocks began to crow—the clouds of the eastern sky to break asunder, and the morning to dawn. When it was tolerably light I started up, resolved on a stroll over the meadows. Before going out, however, I went into the parlour, where I found every thing in the utmost confusion. Chairs, tables, walking-sticks, and logs of wood, lay all over the floor, and every thing upset or in a wrong position. I then proceeded to the outer door, which I opened, but started back in horror, on perceiving a human skull lying on a sheet at my right hand, just without the door. Recovering from my fright, I gathered it up, and could not restrain my laughter, when I discovered it to be nothing more than a mask, representing a death’s head. It seems while we were all wrangling the night before, my uncle had stepped out of bed—dressed himself—piled all the furniture, logs of wood and timber, he could in the apartment, in a heap, crowning the pyramid with a dozen or more walking-sticks, which had lain time out of mind on the top of an old cupboard—then gone up stairs and put on the horrid mask—brought down a pistol, and enveloped himself from his feet to his chin, in a clean white sheet; after alarming us, just as the clock struck the awful hour of twelve, by striking three heavy blows

against the wall with a huge log of wood, he contrived to tumble down the whole mass of furniture at once—fired his pistol at the same moment, and then burst in upon us in the manner described.

I now went out. As I was crossing the yard, I discovered several drops of blood on a stone, which I could no way account for, but by supposing some of my good cousins had received, in their retreat, a fall; and, a little further, I discovered a pair of shoes. A receptacle for the filth of the byre, in another part of the yard, bore evident marks of some one having had therein a severe struggle.

Indeed the adventures of the flying heroes had been various and woeful; one of them, he at whom the spectre made such a sudden bound, as I afterwards ascertained, actually ran seven miles without stopping, and with his shrieks, supposing the grim monster close at his heels, almost raised the whole country. I now proceeded onwards over the fields, listening to the warbling lark ‘springing blithely up to greet the purpling east.’ The air was fresh and pure, and, in the beauties of nature, I awhile forgot the events of the preceding evening. With hasty steps I roved over the faintly recollected scenes, where I had in childhood spent some of my happiest hours, until weary with my rambles I returned to breakfast.

TWELVE O'CLOCK AT NIGHT.

“ Well, if any thing be damn'd,
It will be twelve o'clock at night; that twelve
Will ne'er escape.

It is the Judas of the hours, wherein
Honest salvation is betrayed to sin.”

REVENGER'S TRAGEDY.

THE opinion above delivered concerning that “celebrated hour*” to which the literary world is so deeply indebted, is most harsh and unchristian. It is now many years since first I had the honour of forming an acquaintance with *Twelve o'clock at Night*, and in the interim I have known it in almost every department of life; yet I cannot charge my memory with any misconduct of which it has been guilty, that at all warrants so severe a denunciation; but, on the contrary, must own that of all the four-and-twenty hours it is the one from which I have derived the most intense and most varied pleasure, and is indeed “the sweetest morsel of the night.” Whoever will take the pains of looking a little deeper than the surface of things, and of giving that attention to the subject which common charity requires of all men when a reputation is at stake, will discover that there is much more of antique prejudice than of sound reason in the damnatory clauses of the poet; and will find that if certain of the imputations levelled against the “witching hour” may formerly have had some slight semblance of

* “It was at the celebrated hour of twelve, &c.” See “*The Heroine*.”

foundation, twelve o'clock at night, like a good Christian hour as it is, has repented of the past, and, in the language of Shakspeare, has "reformed it altogether;" leading at the present *day* (if that be not a bull) as exemplary a life, as if it had been brought up in the tabernacle, or had been appointed deputy licenser of plays to my Lord Chamberlain.

One of the standing accusations against twelve o'clock at night is, that it is a dark and gloomy hour, of a lowering and suspicious countenance, and an avowed protector of rogues and vagabonds.

"Oh! grim-look'd night! oh! night with hue so black."

Now though this might fairly be met with a reflection that the matter in charge is more a misfortune than a fault; and that if the sun chose to keep better hours, or the moon were not so capricious in her movements, midnight might be as flaunting as the "garish eye of day;" yet there is no necessity for availing ourselves of the plea. Let any one who has a curiosity to gratify, but take the trouble of walking into Regent-street, or any other of the great thoroughfares of the metropolis, and he will find twelve o'clock at night fairly outshining its *soi-disant* radiant brother, twelve at noon, (who by the by is much too frequently under a cloud,) and, without being dependent upon "the seasons or their changes," is all the year round alike brilliant and gay; which is much more than can be said of the greatest and happiest wits upon town, from Jekyll to ——— inclusive. Then as to the keeping bad company, twelve o'clock may be seen every *evening* at the best houses in London ushering into the ball-room whatever is most choice and select in the supreme *bon ton* of the supreme *bon genre*.

Another most absurd imputation, from which it is scarcely necessary to defend this "injured innocent," is that of murder. A night-prowling bandit figures well in a melodrame; such innuendoes as

"Wither'd murder
Alarum'd by his sentinel the wolf,
Whose howl's his watch,"

may cut a very good splash in poetry; and "The midnight murd'rer bursts the faithless bar," is very soon said; but who ever heard of twelve o'clock at night being present at a duel, that most fashionable and approved mode of manslaughter? If such a charge had been brought against six o'clock in the morning, or against the hour between riding-time and dressing for dinner, it might not be wholly divested of colour; but twelve at night would be very clever to catch a man to kill, at Chalk Farm, or the "Fifteen Acres" either.* Then as to assassination, that might have been all very well when men passed the midnight hour asleep and alone; but now, when this hour has become the time of general assembly, the thing is impossible. In this respect, indeed, twelve at night is much more sinned against than sinning: for there is not a tavern in London in which, on every night in the year,

* The Fifteen Acres is the accustomed seat of duelling *rendezvous* for his Majesty's lieges of the city of Dublin. An Attorney lately, in penning a challenge, which perhaps he mistook for a lease, directed his opponent to meet him "at the Fifteen Acres, *be the same more or less.*"

there will not be found a set of jolly dogs drowning the calumniated hour, like the unfortunate Clarence, in a wine cask ; and while the masters are thus killing this eldest born of time, the apprentices, with a like murderous intention, engage in fights with the Charleys, and strive to get rid of midnight by the most violent and disreputable means. Even the gravest dowagers do not flinch from this species of slaughter ; not only forming an unholy alliance with the four kings, but enlisting the very knaves in their warfare against poor twelve at night. There is not, indeed, an hour on the dial-plate that has so much to fear from clubs, or has more cause to dread finding every man with his card in his hand, as it were, prepared for a challenge. Amongst its other imputed sins, twelve o'clock at night likewise labours under an ill reputation for gallantry, which, but for the plea of "*numerus defendit*," might perhaps give us some trouble, so inveterate is the notion. No one has a worse name for dealing in rope-ladders and assignations, for hiding blushes and encouraging all sorts of peccadilloes. All this, however, is prejudice, pure prejudice ; for, as I hope to be saved, I do not think there is a single cuckold, even east of Temple-bar, that can fairly lay his misfortune to the door of this hour. The worst that can justly be charged against twelve at night is the helping a lady to put on her rouge ; or, perhaps, a little innocent flirtation in window-seats, door-ways, or the staircases of crowded assemblies. Most commonly, indeed, twelve at night is otherwise employed ; being either engaged at the dinner-table, or, perhaps, listening to the snoring of country gentlemen in the House of Commons, while the Chancellor of the Exchequer explains his budget, or Messrs. B—— or B—— favour the speaker with a methodist sermon. There are some malicious persons, I own, who pretend that this good behaviour of twelve at night is all owing to gas lights and vagrant acts, which make him more careful of exposing his infirmities. But every body knows that the chief pleasure of gallantry lies in the vice ; and Milton has told us that

"It's only daylight that makes sin ;"

from which premises the logical conclusion is, that twelve at night is a stranger to the greatest charm of love, and may be regarded as less disposed to indulgence than certain other sly and prudish hours, which hope to pass unobserved and unsuspected. In confirmation of all which, appeals may safely be made to the prevalence of ottomans and muslin curtains, and to the published annals of Doctors Commons.

Another unfounded accusation against midnight is keeping late hours. Formerly, not to be in bed before midnight was, I admit, esteemed a rakehellish practice. But Shakspeare, who knew every thing, (*omne cognoscibile*, at least,) and, as the Frenchman has it, "*first destroyed this worl' and den made anoser for himself,**"—Shakspeare has fully refuted this calumny. "To be up after midnight," he says, "and to go to bed then, is early ; so that to go to bed after midnight is to go to bed betimes." Midnight lucubrations were formerly, perhaps, a frequent cause of those pale and emaciated faces which were then to

* In probable quotation of "Exhausted worlds and then imagined new."—*Dr. Johnson's Prologue*.

be found in the quadrangles of Trinity and Christchurch; but now-a-days, if such faces are to be seen there, I should much rather be disposed to accuse Aurora, brandy-punch, and Havannah cigars.

While some persons have busied themselves in traducing twelve at night, and accusing it of all sorts of wantonness and debauchery, others have been no less industrious in embroiling this hour with legitimacy, and in sending it to the *carcere duro* for treason and conspiracy. If these gentlemen, however, would tell the truth, they would own that the only treason now in vogue, the treason against common sense and common right, is carried on openly and in the face of day.

To defend midnight from the charge of sorcery will, with many, be thought a rejection of all authority, and a contempt for established order,—that unforgiveable sin of the modern code. There are, it must be owned, so many *useful* practices and prejudices which are alone “upheld by old repute, consent, and custom,” without any other foundation, that it is no wonder if certain folks are a little shy of meddling with ghosts, witches, and divining rods, for fear of pulling an old house about their heads. The hole of a water-rat may let in water enough to burst a dyke. At first sight, therefore, I was, like a loyal right-thinking man as I am, about to let judgment go by default, to admit the “secret, black, and *midnight* hags” of Macbeth, and abide by the consequences, when luckily I recollected a recent declaration against the reality of witchcraft from the Bench, which seems to prove with tolerable satisfaction that sorcery is no longer “part and parcel of the law of the land,” and consequently not under the protection of the libel code. I shall, therefore, take the liberty—under correction of the Constitutional society—of asserting that if, in the language of the poet, “*there’s no such thing*” as witchcraft, we may logically conclude that midnight cannot have been guilty of the offence. All this, however, I advance with great modesty and hesitation, seeing that contradictory precedents are equally binding; and that the *dictum* of King James’s judges is quite as valid in law as Mr. Justice Abbot’s can be, for the life of him.

Twelve o’clock at night, like other great personages, leads a very different life in town and in the country. In London the only stars it ever sees are those in the chalky firmament of ball-rooms or on the breasts of gallant knights; its only lights are wax candles and ladies’ eyes; and if it were even inclined to dose, the thunder of rolling carriages, and the roar of the footmen’s artillery, would “murder sleep.” In the country, midnight is as tranquil as the grave, and melancholy as the churchyard. When its approach is announced by the iron tongue of time, the owl hoots in concert with the bell, and the tender virgin hides her moistened forehead deep between the sheets, while her snowy bosom palpitates with “thick-coming fancies” and “horrible imaginings.” Why this particular hour should be so disagreeable to village maidens, while it is in such general estimation with metropolitan belles, I leave for others to elucidate; nor shall I further extend the present lucubration, than to do justice by twelve at night upon the score of religion; a point the more important, because in the present day it is so much the fashion to think that no man is right in his own faith, unless he is troublesomely inquisitive concerning that of his neighbour; and *because it is so customary* to be more anxious to know what church an

individual frequents, than what are his actions, or what his moral respectability. For the satisfaction of the curious, then, be it known that twelve o'clock at night, before the Reformation, bore a most exemplary character for piety ; and "midnight lauds" were in universal request. I presume, therefore, that no one in these Protestant realms will suppose for one moment that twelve at night is the worse for having embraced the Lutheran religion ; or will believe that its piety is a bit the less fervent because it seeks the privacy of a chamber, and is no longer exhibited in churches and monasteries. With this fact in the rear of my defence, I think I may save myself the trouble of peroration, and without further ceremony commit my client, with a certainty of acquittal, to the verdict of an enlightened and intelligent country. M.

'PRESENCE OF MIND IN A GHOST.

It has been questioned amongst the learned, whether there be such things (or nothings) as ghosts; but whether or not, and leaving this argument to the curious, the following may be relied upon as an instance of extraordinary presence of mind in an apparition.

In the year 1421, the widow of Ralph Cranbourne, of Dipmore End, in the parish of Sandhurst, Berks, was one midnight alarmed by a noise in her bed-chamber, and, looking up, she saw at her bed foot the appearance of a Skeleton (which she verily believed was her Husband,) nodding and talking to her upon its fingers, or finger-bones, after the manner of a dumb person. Whereupon she was so terrified, that after striving to scream aloud, which she could not, for her tongue clave to her mouth, she fell backward as in a swoon; yet not so insensible

withal but she could see that at this the Figure became agitated and distressed, and would have clasped her, but upon her appearance of loathing it desisted, only moving its jaw upward and downward, as if it would cry for help but could not for want of its parts of speech. At length, she growing more and more faint, and likely to die of fear, the Spectre suddenly, and as if at a thought, began to swing round its hand, which was loose at the wrist, with a brisk motion, and the finger bones being long and hard, and striking sharply against each other, made a loud noise, like to the springing of a watchman's rattle. At which alarm, the neighbours running in, stoutly armed, as against thieves or murderers, the spectre suddenly departed.

Hist. Berks, vol. xxv. p. 976.

THE SPECTRE UNMASKED.

A Tale from the German.

"We will now begin No. 2," said the professor, as he tied the strings of his portfolio of prints, and looked towards another which was lying by the table: "this will, I think, afford you still more pleasure; but, Madam, you look so frequently at the clock, that I fear ——"

"I only fear," said the counsellor's lady, "that it is growing too late to begin another; and it would be really a pity to hurry over such well-selected works. If your engagements will permit some other time?"

"It is not yet very late," her husband replied, as he was lifting a heavy folio on the table; "we shall have plenty of time to look over this part, leisurely enough; what makes you in such a hurry to-night?"

"I think it best for every one to be at his own home in the evening," observed the wife of the counsellor; "it is much safer."

"Safer?" asked the counsellor, laughing, "you pay a fine compliment to our police! in what may the danger consist, which you seem to fear so much, now the military, who are generally the greatest destroyers of safety, have left the town?"

"That is the very cause of my fear," rejoined the lady; "they would not have left us, if they had not doubted of their own security; the enemy are, I fear, approaching, and disturbances often arise when they are least expected."

"Oh! if that be your only ground of alarm," said the professor, laughing, "we may proceed with our prints very safely; it will be long enough before the enemy arrive here, and, I think, we are more likely to see our protectors (as they term themselves) again, than our foes, for they are no longer our enemies. In the mean time, your apprehensions are not without foundation; for here in the very first leaves, I shall show you some of these Tartarian tribes, at least in effigy."

"Another time, I beg," replied the anxious lady; "if you knew my uneasiness, you would yourself be glad to have me at home."

"But really," said the counsellor, endeavouring to tranquillize her, "you are needlessly alarmed; according to the latest news, a few days may possibly bring about some military events, or send us some strange guests—but I will answer for to-morrow; and as to this evening, there is not the remotest probability of any thing happening."

It was in vain they sought to convince the lady of the groundlessness of her alarm; she became obviously more and more anxious, and finally, not to destroy the pleasure of the party, she proposed that the professor should accompany them home, and that he and her husband might there look over some prints and pictures together, on which discussions had formerly arisen between them. The scheme was acceded to; the professor laughed at her earnest exhortation, while he double-locked his doors; and the party proceeded with many jests and much merriment to the house of the counsellor, where the conversation on the latest works of art soon resumed its former vivacity.

"Would one not believe," observed the counsellor during the absence of his lady, "that my wife had second sight? Her strange solicitude makes me almost anxious myself; it is not customary with her."

"Let us come to the discussions which are the order of the day," observed the professor; "you surely cannot believe in such things; we

shall be able to look at your beautiful works of art as perfectly at our ease as if we only knew Cosaks and Bashkirs from the descriptions of travellers."

The counsellor seemed not of this opinion, he became somewhat absent, and the remarks of the professor on the antiquities of Germany, which had been reserved for this evening's discussion, and which he uttered with all the enthusiasm of an antiquary, scarcely gained attention. The professor laughed repeatedly at the belief in forebodings which his friend's anxiety manifested, and adduced many arguments, founded on natural history and experience, to prove its fallacy.

"I can object nothing to your reasoning," said the counsellor at last, "except the numerous results of experience, which should seem to confirm the reverse of your doctrine, and which would open to us a temporary view into realms inaccessible to human knowledge.—We cannot entirely reject the testimony of men worthy of credit, and who must be acquitted of any attempt to deceive."

"Why not," replied the professor, "when the doctrine itself is opposed to all the laws of possibility? Men of the greatest veracity and sincerity, may be deceived themselves; it is, in truth, with these forebodings as with *ignes fatui*,—many tell you they have heard of them, but not one with whom I have ever spoken has, himself, witnessed them. Till I meet with a ghost-seer, who assures me seriously and on his word that he has experienced the truth of them himself, when wide awake, and in full possession of reason and consciousness—till then, I reject the whole as futile."

"And if such a person were to be found," said the Counsellor, "would you then believe?"

"Hum," replied the professor, shrugging his shoulders, "only after a very close investigation. Deception is so easy—it is in all cases only a more apparent or more hidden deception, that cherishes this credulity."

"In all cases!" repeated the other: "I cannot agree with you there, I myself was once a witness of a circumstance of this nature, which, though I have not thought of it for some years, now recurs to my memory, and which was neither a dream nor an illusion. I will narrate it to you. You will believe me when I assure it is not a fictitious adventure; and when you have heard the particulars, you may judge whether I could have been deceived.

"It must be now nearly ten years since I was appointed a counsellor in the chamber at M——. I was then unmarried, and was fond of travelling; while my elder comrades, on the contrary, loved their ease, and I often undertook to transact business for them at a distance from home. Once when I was preparing for one of these expeditions, which would cause me to pass near the convent at Wallbach, one of the older counsellors requested me to take that opportunity of viewing the place for him. It had been for a long time changed into an Amthaus, and the officer who held the situation had often petitioned for a repair of the old building; but when the chamber agreed to the request, the then Amtman found the new building unnecessary, and stated that he would content himself with the habitable part of it, if, in recompense, some other conveniences were allowed him. In short, I was commissioned to survey the place narrowly, and report on the expediency of repairing the old, or building altogether a new Amthaus.

“On my journey to my ultimate destination, I contented myself with viewing the cloister in passing, and I was well pleased with the Amtman that he was not willing, merely for the sake of a new house, to destroy the fine old Gothic pile, which looked so venerable in the plain from the surrounding hills. I rejoiced in my approaching acquaintance with him, and his curious antique neighbourhood. On my return, I arrived rather late at Wallbach; the setting moon, occasionally obscured by heavy thunderclouds, partially illumined the old towers and dark grey walls, which seemed to me to bear their age tolerably well. The Amtman’s lady, an elderly but still an active woman, welcomed me, and apologized for the absence of her husband on a professional journey, from which he was not expected back till the following day. She seemed much embarrassed, and I was obliged repeatedly to assure her that I could not be surprised at the absence of her husband, as my visit was totally unexpected by him, and that it would be quite time enough on the morrow to transact the business I was commissioned upon. As I soon found that my presence disturbed the family, I requested to be shown to my chamber, and a dunce of a servant conducted me through many cross and winding passages, to an antique room with Gothic windows and ornaments, and there left me, humbly wishing me a good night. Fatigue from my journey, and ennui, induced me to go to bed, and I soon fell asleep. I was awakened I know not how in a few hours, and, while endeavouring to compose myself again, I heard most remarkable sounds, as if caused by slow, heavy, gigantic footsteps: the longer I listened, the more I was alarmed at this noise. The steps seemed to indicate the presence of some supernatural being, and occasionally the very floor trembled under them. Although the noise itself was not very loud, and appeared to proceed from a distance, I could not help shuddering, though I endeavoured to banish my apprehension; but it was in vain I attempted to sleep. The noise at last ceased, to my great joy, but ere long I heard a rustling at my door, and thought I could distinguish a slight knocking: I sat up in my bed, and looked earnestly towards it, but it remained fast; I had hardly laid myself down again when the rustling and knocking were repeated; and when I again looked towards the door, I clearly saw that it was moved ——”

“Fancy!” cried the professor, “nothing but fancy, delusion of an excited imagination.”

“No such thing,” resumed the narrator, “you shall hear more. I saw the door move, and I cried out, ‘Who is there?’ All was again still for a short time, then again something knocked louder and stronger, and the door opened ——”

“No! are you serious?” interrupted the professor.

“Perfectly:—this was too much for me, I sprang out of bed towards the door, and there I saw distinctly a slender white female figure in a faint gleam of light that instantly glided away. It seemed to beckon to me. I seized my light, my fear giving way to an almost wild courage. The figure glided through some dark passages; I hastened after, but could not overtake it; on a sudden it vanished, but when I reached the spot where I saw it last, I discovered a staircase; I thought I could still descry at the bottom of it something of the pale light, and therefore hastily descended, but there was no one to be seen. A doorway

was before me, I stepped out through it, and found myself in the open air. A multitude of similar adventures crowded into my mind. While I was looking round for my mysterious conductor, I was startled by a fearful crash, the earth shook under me, and a cloud of dust veiled every object from my sight. I distinguished only a loud and confused cry; people hastened from all sides to the spot; and it was presently clear to me that the whole part of the building in which I had slept had fallen to the ground. A quarter of an hour later and I should have been buried in the ruins; had not this singular vision led me from my chamber, I should have shared the fate of my bed, which was found shattered to pieces under the rubbish. I hastened to quit the fatal place where this accident now rendered my presence unnecessary. Before I went, however, I made inquiries if any thing supernatural had ever before been remarked in the building, but nobody, that I could learn, had ever perceived any thing: I therefore carefully refrained from mentioning my adventure to any one, and had myself nearly forgotten it; but the anxiety of my wife this evening, and subsequently, as she quitted the room, a certain resemblance to the warning spectre, in my mind recalled it to my recollection."

"Then I can easily believe," said the professor, laughing, "that you followed the fair spectre courageously enough, if that be the case; she probably promised a more romantic adventure than the tumbling down of an old building."

"Jesting apart," replied the counsellor, "setting aside the supernatural, the figure would have been captivating enough;—but to return to the purpose, if you persist in supposing the appearance to have been imaginary, the result only of my fancy; how can you account for the singular coincidence of my actual preservation by it from an apparently inevitable danger? Either it must have been some tutelary spirit, or a foreboding power in my own mind; give me, if you can, another explanation of the phenomenon."

The professor sought for a third, in vain; he mentioned many forced explanations, of which it was easy for the counsellor to show the fallacy. The dispute was still continued, when a distant noise in the street attracted the attention of the counsellor. The disturbance increased and drew nearer; they all went to the window; the patrol were running backwards and forwards, the doors of the houses were thronged with the curious; presently the police officers appeared; the Cosaks were near—the Cosaks, the Cosaks, re-echoed from the streets, and a loud and wild "hurrah!" instantly followed.

The professor's mind ran, in an instant, through all the intermediate degrees from incredulity to the fullest conviction; he looked for his hat, and would willingly have returned home, but the multitudes that thronged the streets rendered it impossible. The new visitors had, in the mean time, effected the objects of their casual visit; after some inquiries, they withdrew in perfect order, leaving the town to rest again. The people, nevertheless, still continued to roam through the streets in crowds, and the counsellor, who had been repeatedly required during the event, was glad he happened to be at home so opportunely.

"There," said he, as they were assembled together again at his house discussing the circumstance, "there we have another proof of the power of foreboding, and one indeed which we have experienced our-

selves, not heard by tradition : what will now become of your incredulity ?”

“ I am totally vanquished,” said the professor, wringing his hands comically : “ Your lady, counsellor, has quite converted me ; henceforth I will believe in forebodings, ghosts, spectres, warnings, and whatever you would have me believe in.”

“ At least,” said the lady smiling, “ you will have some respect for the secret powers of my mind, and if you do not wish to forget them, you will fulfil my prophecy, which is that you will remain our guest during the present evening.”

The professor bowed acquiescence, and requested that he might exhibit the casket containing the antiquities which he had been about to show to the company, when the fears of the counsellor’s lady had deprived him of their society. A messenger was despatched to his house, and in a short time returned with it. “ Behold,” said the antiquary, after he had shown many rare and curious things, “ behold my greatest treasure ! this beautiful old vase, which, as I shall prove to you, has most probably been an ancient relic of a cloister, and is unquestionably of inestimable worth. The form is almost Grecian ; and I think nothing more beautiful, and at the same time more simple, can be imagined : unfortunately one of the handles is injured ; but this injury has enabled me to come to a most important conclusion concerning it. I believe it unique in its kind. Under the broken handle an inscription is yet visible, that coincides remarkably with the place where this vase was found. It had been walled up in an ancient convent most carefully. This convent formerly possessed many relics, and these were discovered some years ago on the destruction of the pile ; among them was this vase ; and its existence was probably unknown, latterly, even to the monks themselves, for it was hid in a niche of the wall. Now you must know that this is neither more nor less than an ancient model of the holy and celebrated Graal* of our Lord. You can see the inscription still quite legible : **AD : SM : Graal : D J D : JC :** *Ad Sanctissimum Graalem Domini Jesus deliniatus Jussu Thesaurarii* ; that is, ladies, in the vernacular tongue, ‘ modelled after the most holy graal of our Lord, by the command of the treasurer.’ On this account it was so carefully preserved ; and you may remark that this palpable vase-like form overturns the opinion of some writers, who have maintained that the graal was in the form of a patera, and it was, as you see, clearly of this cup-like shape.”

The counsellor’s wife had repeatedly, during this harangue, held her handkerchief to her mouth, but when it was over she burst into laughter. At last she exclaimed, “ Pray do not henceforth accuse any one of credulity who believes in *political* or spiritual forebodings, since you are so gratuitous with your conviction, and take an earthen pipkin for a monastic relic.”

“ May I request you,” said the professor rather indignantly, “ to look at this vessel again ? and when you take all the circumstances into consideration, you will no longer doubt the genuineness of it for a

* The vessel out of which the last Passover was eaten.—See the Romance of Sir Lancelot du Lac for his adventures in search of it.

moment. The competition for it at the auction was so great that I was compelled to bid five-and-twenty louis-d'ors for it."

"I could have saved you that expense," replied the lady, "if you had asked my advice first. If I mistake not, the potter still lives who made it for me for a florin."

"You jest," said the professor, peevishly.

The counsellor laughed with mischievous joy, and requested an explanation.

"It is a long history, and there is a piece of innocent deceit connected with it, which I aided a friend of mine to practise. I have not thought about it for a long time; but your holy graal now recalls the whole to my mind. A friend of my mother's, who had greatly aided her in bringing me up, resided with her husband, who was an Amtman, in a retired cloister, which had been converted into an Amthaus for his abode. The country around was very agreeable, and I passed a good deal of time there with much pleasure. The only drawback to my friend's comfort was the very limited extent of the habitable part of the building, though it was otherwise spacious enough. Her husband was like some professors and counsellors of my acquaintance—a great admirer of antiquities and graals; and found in the old convent an inexhaustible fund for the indulgence of his favourite pursuit. For this purpose he scrupled not to crowd his family into the smallest possible space, and propped up the tumbling walls with beams in every direction, because he could not resolve to have the old house repaired, or a new one built. All our remonstrances were vain; and finally he carried it so far that no domestics would remain in the family for fear the house should tumble down and bury them in its ruins. At length, to our great joy, we heard that a commission was appointed, and the place was to be examined; but as the Amtman knew well that if an inspection were to take place, he could not prevent a new building being ordered, and he should be deprived of his hobby-horse, he made a journey to the capital to protest against the commission for a new edifice. My friend, with whom I happened to be at the time, was inconsolable over her disappointment, when a secretary, an acute and sensible man, suggested to her, in jest, a remedy, which however she eagerly seized on, as it was founded on an event very likely to happen, and we all agreed to assist her in the execution. This secretary remarked that the first great storm would most probably blow down the house and bury many people in its ruins; but if we were to remove all the props, it would tumble of itself; which could be done by night, after first taking care that every body and all the animals were removed to a place of security. So we chose a time when the Amtman was absent on a journey. We had only to select clever and discreet people to help us; and when it was done, we agreed to tell him that a gust of wind in the night had, we supposed, overthrown the old place, or that it had fallen of itself. My friend was delighted with this scheme, and we made every preparation accordingly. We removed all the valuable furniture, and especially all the curiosities of the master of the house. The messengers, who dwelt in the ruinous part, were instructed in our intentions, and even helped us in our labour; the uninitiated we sent out of the way on different pretences; every thing was ready; the

props were bound round with strong ropes, which were to be pulled by horses to draw them suddenly from under the roof and walls, and we only waited for midnight ; but while we were thus busy a coach drove up to the door, and the expected commissioner made his appearance. But I really believe you are laughing at me and my story, which is very uncivil—well, I will keep it to myself.”

“Quite the contrary,” said the professor ; “your story is very interesting to us, and I beg you most earnestly to continue ; our laughing was occasioned by a similar history we heard no great while ago.”

“Oh, you must tell us that !” exclaimed the lady.

“Afterwards,” replied the professor ; “but first permit us to hear the conclusion of your adventure.”

“You left off at the arrival of the commissioner,” said the counsellor.

“Ah, true,” replied his lady, smiling ; “I had more business to perform yet, that evening. He was a young and handsome man—what was his name ? let me recollect—oh ! Etmüller.”

“The Herr Etmüller !” exclaimed her husband, gaily. “Etmüller a young and handsome man ! Why he was a dry, withered old fellow, who died five years ago in his eighty-sixth year.”

“What then ?” observed she, “that must have been another person ; this commissioner, I tell you, was a well-formed man about your size ; and, as I recollect, his voice resembled yours very much : so you may imagine I was not a little taken with him—but, professor, you make me quite angry with your laughing ; and you, too, are beginning again, my dear : you are both of you making a jest of me.”—

The professor deprecated, the husband flattered, and both begged her to proceed with her story.

“—But then let no one laugh again !” threatened the fair narrator, “else I am quite mute. Well, this handsome commissioner arrived ; but he was by far too polite ; for he prated such fine things to my friend, about her romantic abode in the old convent, and his own fondness for these fatal antiquarian researches, that she lost all hope that he would be opposed to her husband, and report the necessity of a new building. She, therefore, desired me to superintend the remaining preparations, whilst she entertained her guest ; but I presume she was little edified by this antiquarian commissioner, for she soon had him conducted to his room, and came to assist us in our arrangements for our work.

“But we were not a little frightened as we were going about the court to look after the workmen, who were already chopping at the props, that they might give way the easier, to see a light in one of the windows of the very part of the house about to be precipitated ; and in the instant it occurred to us that the stupid servant Peter, who was ignorant of our intentions, had conducted the stranger into the former state room, which was at that instant expected to fall ; we instantly called to the workmen to stop, and ordered the horses to be unfastened from the ropes ; but the question now was, how we were to get the guest out of the tottering building without betraying all. My friend was so agitated by fear that she could hardly stand ; I do not know how, but I mustered courage enough to determine to call him myself. Let him conjecture what he will, thought I, so he be once rescued. I accordingly ran to

his chamber, and knocked at the door, and when I heard him move I quickly withdrew ; but, as I saw nothing of him, I knocked again ; the “ come in ” which he called out lustily, frightened me away again ; I now felt the floor begin to shake under me. In my terror, I forced open the door and was about to enter, when he approached me with a light. He may, I dare say, have taken me in my white dress for a ghost, or for a nun come back again, but I was very glad to see him up, and to hear him follow me, as I hastened back again ; he continued to pursue me till I got into a little court at some distance ; I returned by a shorter way to the workmen, and upon my giving them a sign that the stranger was in safety, the old walls with a tremendous crash fell in. I took care not to be seen by him again, as he might have recognised me, and that would have betrayed our roguery ; but I would not willingly experience the anxiety of that night’s adventure again.”

“ And is it then really possible,” exclaimed the counsellor, clasping his wife to his breast, “ thou didst really venture into the tottering and nearly falling building to become a protecting angel to that stranger ? ”

“ Oh, there was nothing to wonder at,” replied the lady ; “ the danger overcame every other consideration. But really I do not understand this,—am I betrayed ? you look at me, my love, with such particular affection, and the professor there is laughing again like a wild man—what does all this mean ? ”

“ You shall soon know,” replied the counsellor. “ While you were absent, I told the professor, for the sake of convincing him of the error of his incredulity, how once a protecting spirit had conducted me out of a house, which I had no sooner quitted than it fell down ; and now I find that this spirit was no other than that dear angel, who soon after began to accompany me through life in a corporeal form, my Antonia.”

“ How,” exclaimed the lady, “ were you then that commissioner ? ”

“ Exactly. Ettmüller, who was unwell at the time, commissioned me to execute that business for him.”

“ Oh, this is indeed delightful,” embracing her husband affectionately.

“ The professor would indeed now triumph, if these brave Cosaks had not embraced your cause against his unbelief.”

“ You may give up my cause,” said his wife smiling ; “ I had very good grounds for my foreboding respecting the visit of this night. My brother, as you know, is with the Prussians in the neighbourhood. He sent me, this morning, a letter for his wife, with a secret injunction to deliver it this evening to a Cosak who would ask for it ; but if no one came, I was to burn it directly. The address on it was, I conclude, merely to deceive. The Cosak was true to his commission, and had the letter and something to drink besides. My brother will excuse himself for making this a secret to you.”

“ Bravo ! admirable,” shouted the professor ; “ and so can all visions and marvellous stories be elucidated, I doubt not.”

“ I heartily agree with you,” said the lady, “ and can fulfil your expectation on the spot as to your holy graal. You may remember I told you my story originated in my seeing that, and now in justice I must return to it. The Amtman, my friend’s husband, was quite inconsolable for the loss of his treasures ; for though we had preserved the greater part in safety, yet we had not saved all, for we poor ignorant folks could not appreciate the inestimable value of some of the old

pottery ; but nothing grieved him so much as the loss of one vessel of inconceivable rarity, and my friend, who was heartily tired of his endless lamentations, wrote to me to get something antique like it for her directly, which might banish from his mind the recollection of his loss. I knew not where to find such a curiosity ; and so, that nothing might be wanting on my part, I went to our potter, or as he chose to call himself, to the master modeller, and ordered, according to a design I gave him, a cup to look as like an antique as possible. The man was highly flattered by the commission, and must needs put his name and title at length on the vase, which of course rendered it useless for my purpose ; he was therefore obliged to begin it over again, and I failed not to enjoin him from putting his name, as the vase was intended to pass for the work of a master who had been dead more than a thousand years. Nevertheless, as I now find, he must have promised himself immortality from his labours, as he could not refrain from inserting his initials at least, under the handle, to hand them down to posterity.”—“The devil !” cried the professor, with rather a clouded brow.

“So it is,” continued the lady. “Look here as I read it, your inscription proves ‘Adam Stephen Graal did it.’”

The counsellor burst out into a laugh, but the professor would not give up his graal yet. “You jest, Madam ! Ay, ay, this is all an invention of your own. Very good, upon my word.”

“It is perfectly true, nevertheless,” replied she, “you may convince yourself by my friend Graal’s first essay, which I fortunately have preserved, and where the inscription is legible at full length. I shall be happy to present you with it as a new curiosity for your museum.”

A general laugh from every one present put an end to the conversation ; and they all unanimously agreed neither to be superstitious themselves, nor to blame credulity too hastily in others.

THE REPOSITORY.

FROM THE AMERICAN MONTHLY MAGAZINE.

THE SHRIEKING GHOST.

By the Author of the Woodlands.

"—Some deeds do reach
"Down to the grave, disquieting the dead."

THE Sun had just set behind the blue summit of the Shade Mountain, whose broken crags hang in wild and fearful grandeur over the low sylvan valley, that runs from the shores of the Mantango, into the broad open plains of Northumberland, towards the Susquehanna; but ere the first star became visible in the moonless sky, the clattering tramp of a rapidly approaching horse was heard upon the distant bridge and down the stony road, hurrying onward, as if for life. A moment after, a stranger was discovered mounting the steep ascent of a prominent bluff, which overlooked the cedars of the lowland vale, and reining in his coal black courser on its utmost verge, he sat and cast an eye of wild disquietude over the rude scene. The recently erected cottage of Eschelwoltz, hid by a cluster of low willows upon which the shadows of the approaching night already hung their dusky mantle, one might suppose had escaped his observation; or his restless and perturbed spirit had searched out some single object of interest too intense to allow a wandering thought, or glance, towards any other,—for ever and anon he raised his white, trembling hand, and parted the locks that clustered over his forehead, and gazed towards the uplifted crags of the cloud piercing mountain, and upon the shaggy pines that stood unshaken in the shade at its base, and far downwards where, among the springs of the winding rivulet, the white flint stones lay in groups, among the long grass, and the neglected ruins of an ancient tenement mouldered in fragments on the ground.

Old Eschelwoltz walked out into the valley from the cottage threshold, where he had been standing, and surveyed the stranger with earnestness, then shook his head, folded his arms upon his bosom, and cast a long and anxious glance towards the dim eastern horizon. A small speck had just risen above the treetops, and began slowly to spread itself abroad

in the sky; a faint breeze already caused the leaves to tremble, and a scarce audible sigh breathed in the cool, moist air. He saw and heard, then observed the stranger a moment again, who now remained fixed and motionless, and then returned with a somewhat agitated air to his seat at the cottage door. 'The storms have long been cralled,' said he, 'but yonder apparition will rouse them from their slumbers, and the Shrieking Ghost will be abroad to night.' Alarmed by words of such fearful import, the family gathered to the door, with many inquiries for the reasons upon which these unwelcome conjectures were founded.

The gray-haired hunter had been the tenant of this wild abode for more than thirty years, having emigrated to it from the east when a young man, leaving behind him his kindred, friends, and the small patrimony left him by an aged father. The moving cause of this early measure had never been clearly ascertained, even by the few whom the chances of the chase threw sometimes in his way; but whispers of deeds, from the imputation of which, whether just or not, the strong links of friendship his kindness and hospitality had thrown on those around him, seemed effectually to screen him.—Whatever there might have been, he had now grown gray amid the lonely and solitary pines; and those who had known him longest, spoke most in praise of his stern integrity, his virtue, and his truth. And now the cottage he had buried himself in, alone, for so many years, had become the refuge and the home of a destitute but lovely family of his kindred; who, when the storms of misfortune had driven them from the village of their nativity, had sought and found a welcome in the bosom of the wild willows, on the shores of the Mantango.

It was these novices in the fearful history of the scene amid which they dwelt, who gathered round the old man that evening, and prayed for a solution of the terrifying problem he had spoken. Eschelwoltz while he eyed calmly, but not without a mixture of anxiety, the slowly gathering storm that climbed steadily up the blue eastern sky, pressed tenderly the hands of his favorite Juliet, as she hung upon his neck, (a delicate and lovely girl, reminding him of some beauteous new blown flower, flinging its tendrils to the breeze, and blushing in all the milder richness of its charms, amid the wilds of a rude uncultivated forest) and thus answered to the pressing inquiries of his collected household:

"The cottage which now lies in ruins, half hid among the long rank grass by yonder spring, was twenty years ago the abode of Lawrence and Harriet Neville. It was then the prettiest residence in the whole valley, for there alone the solitary fugitive from climes less rude, beheld with emotions of delight the traces of a tasteful and elegant hand, in the beauteous order with which the vines and flowers were arranged, and the neatness and graceful elegance of every thing around. I often saw, in those days, that happy pair, sitting under the canopied willow that shaded the cottage door, while

their children, smiling in all the gaiety and loveliness of youthful innocence, played around them; and as often have I sat down wearied with a long day's chase and regaled myself at the spring, and listened to Harriet's voice, as she sung some tender and pathetic lay, that recalled, perhaps, the memory of days which had been visited by even a warmer and more brilliant sun than that which shone upon their secluded, humble, but still not unhappy home. She had a sweet voice; the only voice that amid these wilds ever called the salt tears from their deep sources to my cheeks. She was a romantic girl; all soul—all passion—these high and lofty inspirations mingled so powerfully with every lively feeling of fondness in her music, that I forgave myself for weeping, and only wished I had a fountain from whose pure and overflowing sources I could pour a more liberal libation. She had been an erring child; for to love, to trust to love, to yield to it mind and soul and body, in bold defiance of parental warnings and affectionate reproofs, is error. This she had done, and was an exile from a parent's roof, an outcast from the bosom of parental love; and having sacrificed all else for the enjoyment of her passion, she had exchanged for that humble abode a comparative palace, a paradise of all that wealth and family honor could glean from far and near, to brightness and to bless the mysterious dream of life, when she fled her home with Lawrence Neville, and followed him to this rude tract of country, where, midst flood, and forest, and mountain, his only heritage in the world remained.

It was thus, for a while, fortune seemed to linger around their destiny, as loth to have so much of loveliness and worth upon the brink of ruin. The clouds of sorrow which began early to gather over them, were long illumined by hope's fading twilight. As long as Lawrence exerted the active energies of his mind and body, and stood up manfully amid the labors and privations incident to the rude life he was here obliged to lead, the smile of happiness and confiding love fled not from Harriet's brow; her children, two lovely little girls, grew bright and beautiful as the flowers she nursed; and a glow of mild innocence and delight illumined the sylvan scene. But that summer twilight faded away at last.

I remarked one day as I passed the cottage, that the flowers and vines began to be neglected. Soon after, I saw Harriet weeping at the window, and observed that Lawrence sat upon the door-sill, pensive and silent; the little girls stood looking first upon their mother, and then upon their father, as though even they felt, while they wondered why it was.—But they knew not the darkness that was to follow, or the storm that was gathering to make that darkness even more terrific. I noted that day as one of evil omen, and ere long the mystery was revealed. I saw Lawrence lying by the way that led towards a little hamlet on the river, with a half empty bottle by his side, in a state of deep intoxication, and with much difficulty conveyed him home. I warned and entreated him to abandon the course he had fallen

into, pointed out the ruin to which it would expose him, and reminded him of his wife and children. He seemed sensible to all I said. A tear started in his eye. He pressed his hands convulsively on his bosom, shook his head, and departed. I waited anxiously the result. It disappointed me. Then I found that he had flown voluntarily to dissipation, as an escape from cares that pressed too heavily for the firmness of his mind to bear; and as they increased day by day, in proportion increased his unhappy failing.

It was a cruel scene—but I marked its progress, slowly, and steadily, until the consummation. The cottage became a desolate place. The flowers withered among the weeds, the beautiful shrubbery went to ruin, and the vines, unpruned, ran to waste. Poverty came rapidly on; and he who once was, and should have always remained, the stay and solace of the heart that had resigned all for him, and the fond guardian of those sweet pledges of mutual affection which were left to comfort them, even in the hour of adversity, became their foe. Goaded on to madness by an accusing conscience, Lawrence abused and ill treated the defenceless girl, whose only fault was loving him too well; and when, once, his brutality kindled her high spirit to a blaze, and she threw out a threat of leaving him and seeking her home again, he told her she was a prostitute and her children illegitimate. That the person who performed the marriage ceremony was incompetent—and that he had never intended to marry her.

This was undreamed-of treachery. She pondered over it—she believed it, for now that her suspicions were awakened, she thought she saw abundance of corroborating proof. Then vanished the poor solace, for it had been a solace, she derived from the thought that he once loved her. Then was dashed with bitterness, the sweetness that had mingled with the caresses of her children—they were the heirs of shame. Then departed forever the anchor of the spirit, the consciousness of innocence; and then roused up the recollections of a deserted home, a father left to weep over the disgrace of a beloved daughter, a mother's tears, a broken hearted mother's anguish. All these thoughts had slept before, but now they rushed into her bosom, to fill to overflowing the measure of her sorrow.—All was comfortless within; all dark and dreary and desolate without; the star of hope had set, and her soul sunk beneath the storm.

Some females seem particularly formed for suffering. Spirits that melt in the sunshine of prosperity most readily, are found frequently unbent amid the direst evils. But all are not cast in such a mould as this. Harriet endured awhile with firmness, and bore her sufferings in silent sorrow, but when the last evils came upon her, the fever flew from her heart to her brain. She stood in the midst of her little family, in all the fearfulness of a ruined mind, bright and glorious, as at times it shone, in the midst of its ruins; and the last sad deed followed the wreck of reason, while yet the reign of affection remained unbroken.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

THE SECOND DEATH.

We have been requested by several of our readers, to remark on the second death recorded in Revelations. The phrase, second death, occurs only in Revelations, and there but four times; yet the same subject is treated on, tho' in different language, through almost all the New Testament. The singular and highly figurative language used in the Apocalypse, renders many of its subjects obscure; the second death is one of them, and for this reason, we shall first have recourse to other parts of the New Testament in obtaining an understanding of our subject. The second death must be second to a first death, to which it bears some resemblance, as it would be absurd to call one death second to another between which there is no resemblance or analogy. As we have no authority to believe that there is a first and second death of the body, or a second death resembling or analagous to the death of the body, natural death is out of the question in our present enquiry. The first death noticed in scripture, to which there can be a second, resembling it, is that spiritual or moral death in which sin has involved our race—"To be carnally minded is death." To this first death Paul alluded in Eph. 2 : 1—5. "And you *hath he quickened*, who were dead in trespasses and sins."—"But God who is rich in mercy. &c. even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ." This death in *trespasses and sins*, must be the first death, as scripture gives us no account of any death previous to this, and from this death Paul informs his brethren they were quickened. This death and deliverance from it are set forth in the following scriptures, John 5. 24. "He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Again, "We know we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." This death in sins spoken of in the above scriptures from which some were quickened and had passed unto life, is evidently the first death; for those who were embraced in these scriptures certainly did not die a temporal death or any other previous to their being dead in sins.

Now, what is the second death? It must be

a death analagous to the first death in trespasses and sins, or it cannot be second to it. The second death must mean a falling away from that spiritual life and first love which were in exercise after being renewed and quickened from death in trespasses and sins. This death would bear an analogy to the first, and might with propriety be called second to it. This falling away and dead a second time in sins, are clearly expressed in Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6. "For it is impossible for those who were once enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the Holy Ghost, and have tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come, if they shall fall away to renew them again to repentance." Those who were liable to fall away, were such who had been once enlightened—were made partakers of the Holy Ghost—had tasted the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come. They had been quickened from a first death in trespasses and sins, and falling away was a second death. An apostacy or falling away is predicted in different parts of the New Testament. Peter says "For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are entangled, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them. But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, the dog is turned to his own vomit, the sow that washed, to her wallowing in the mire," 2d Peter 2. 20, 21, 22. These persons had certainly "escaped the pollutions of the world," or they could not have been "again entangled therein,"—they had "known the way of righteousness" and had walked therein, or they could not have turned from it. "The latter end is worse with them than the beginning." What was the "beginning" with them? *dead in trespasses and sins*, from which they had been quickened. What is the "latter end with them?" dead the second time. Why is the latter end with them worse than the beginning? because it had been better had they not known the masters will, than after they had known it, to have violated it—they had sinned against greater light, and greater is

their condemnation. They had become dead a second time, and were involved in the consequences of the second death.

These remarks may prepare the mind to enter upon the subject of the second death as it is laid down in the Apocalypse; and we would subjoin to what we have said the following illustration.

"The first place where the phrase *second death* occurs is Rev. ii. 11. and from the connection in which it is found, which serves to make its meaning plain, it is evident it cannot denote a state of endless torture. See vs. 8, 9, 10, 11. "And unto the angel of the church of Smyrna write; These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive; I know thy works, and tribulation and poverty, (but thou art rich) and I know the blasphemy of them which say they are jews, and are not, but are of the synagogues of Satan. Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer; behold the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days; be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life. He that bath an ear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches; He that overcometh shall not be hurt of the second death." Here we remark

1. This was an address and exhortation to the Church of Smyrna delineating their trials, &c. and cautioning them against being overcome by, and yielding to the temptations which surrounded them.

2. There was a promise made that whoever overcame or surmounted the difficulties with which they were encompassed, should not be hurt of the second death.

3. It is implied that those who did not overcome, but contrariwise yielded to temptation should be hurt of the second death; i. e. should fall into the condemnation of apostacy and suffer its direful consequences.

In chap. iii. first five verses, the epistle to the church of Sardis,

1. Speaks of those who *had a name to live but were dead*, which evidently means the second death; as they had been once renewed, made spiritually alive, and had lost their first love, they had become a second time dead in trespasses and sins.

2. Exhorts the church to maintain its ground, to "be watchful and strengthen the things that remain that are ready to die," saying [v. 4.] thou hast a few names, even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white; for they are worthy."

3. Admonishes them to watch, lest they be

come upon as by a thief in the night, when they know it not; and on the other hand encourages them to hope that he should overcome, should be clothed in white raiment, and should not have his name blotted out of the book of life, but should be confessed before the Father and before his angels; which naturally implies that he who did not overcome, but yielded to his trials, and apostatized from the faith, should not be clothed in white raiment nor confessed before the father, but should have his name blotted out of the book of life; as is indicated should be the condition of some; Rev. xx. 15, and xxii. 19, which characters it is plain were to be made sufferers of the *second death*.

The punishment of such apostates is spoken of in Chap. xiv. 9, 12; "And the angel followed, saying with a loud voice, if any man worship the beast and his image and receive his mark in his forehead or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels and in the presence of the Lamb. And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name. Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus."

Note 1, in this quotation, by the contrast here made between those "who worshipped the beast and his image," and those who maintained the "patience of the saints, and kept the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus," we learn that those "who worshipped the beast and his image," had not "kept the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus; hence they were apostates from the faith and subject to the second death.

2. In the account of the punishment of those who worship the beast and his image, we learn that they suffered this punishment in this world or in this state of existence, from the expressions *worship the beast, and have no rest*, (the verbs being in the present tense) as well as from the expression, *day and night*, which belong only to this world and not to eternity, there being "no night there." See also as collateral evidence of the punishment being upon the earth, or while men are in the body, Chap. xix. vs. 20, 21, where we read of the "beast and the false prophet" being "cast alive into the lake burning with fire and brimstone. And the remnant were slain with the sword of him that sat upon the horse—and all the fowls were filled

with their flesh." The language throughout in relation to this subject is highly figurative or metaphorical.

We shall come now to consider the second death and the punishment of it in somewhat a different point of view from the foregoing, though doubtless it is of the same or similar nature with it. The Revelator in Chs. xv. xxi. seems to carry it beyond this state of existence, in relation to those whom the judgments of God in this world had not caused to repent that they might give glory to him. The language used to describe their punishment, though it speaks of "fire and brimstone," is not to be taken literally, but seems to be intended to convey an idea of the intensity of their torment, in the hardness, impenitency, and darkness of their hearts, together with the reproaches of a guilty conscience. It seems to be spoken of in connexion of the resurrection. There is a *first resurrection* spoken of in distinction from the subsequent or *second resurrection*. See xx. 5, 6; "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection; on such the second death hath no power." We may better understand what is here meant by the *second death*, by considering the four last verses in the chapter. "And I saw the dead small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which was the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works. And the sea gave up the dead that were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead that were in them; and they were judged every man according to his works. And death and hell were cast into the lake of fire.—This is the *second death*. And whosoever was not found written in the book of life, was cast into the lake of fire." There is a recapitulation of the same subject in the 8th verse of the following chapter, which, with the texts already noticed, constitutes all the places where the phrase *second death* occurs. On the text now transcribed, we remark,

1. There seems to be an account given of the congregation, at the second resurrection, of all, both small and great, for judgment, who had not had part in the first resurrection.

2. Death and hell, or their attendant circumstances, sin and darkness, are represented as being cast into the lake of fire to be destroyed.

3. There are some whose names are not found written in the book of life having apostatised from the faith and had their names blotted out; these are to be cast into the lake of fire to be punished or to suffer loss, yet eventually to be saved yet so as by fire." See 1 Cor. iii. 15.

There are some other texts of scripture that appear to have a bearing on this subject, particularly Heb. vi. 4, 8 and 10; 26, 29, which texts the reader is requested to turn to, in his Testament, and read. From these passages we learn the impossibility of such apostates being renewed again to repentance (i. e. in this life, and by the means that had been once efficacious in their conversion) that there remained a "certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation," and that the punishment of such who had "counted the blood wherewith they" were once "sanctified, an unholy thing," would be "much sorer" than that of those who had merely "despised Moses' law, and died without mercy under two or three witnesses."

But though the punishment of the second be severe and dreadful we are not authorized to believe it will be endless, nor that those unhappy victims will be forever debarred from the favor of God and the enjoyment of life. For we are informed of a time when death shall be swallowed up in victory (Isa. xxv. 3,) when death, the last enemy, shall be destroyed; (1 Cor. xv. 26,) and certainly the second death is later than the first, and this is the enemy to be destroyed. We are informed, immediately after the account of the second death and its punishment, that "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; (even of those unhappy subjects of the second death) and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away." Is it not then egregiously wrong to contend for the endless continuance of the second death when we have the word of God to prove its total destruction or annihilation? We read Lam. iii. 31, that "the Lord will not cast off forever." God says, Isa. lvii. 16, 17, 18, "For I will not contend forever, neither will I be always wroth: for the spirit should fail before me, and the souls which I have made. For the iniquity of his covetousness was I wroth, and smote him; I hid me and was wroth, and he went on forwardly in the way of his heart: his ways, and will heal him also, and restore comforts to mourners." We read Rev. viii. 12, "the wrath of God." Is it not to contradict these passages to say the wrath of God will forever smoke and eternally remain unsatisfied? The anger of the Lord end but "his mercy endureth forever."

Though it is said death should have

the book of life, yet they will again be written there when "the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began," (Acts iii. 21,) shall be brought about. "They shall obtain mercy that had not obtained mercy; and it shall come to pass in the place where it was said, 'ye are not my people,' there shall they be called, the children of the living God." Probably nearly the same thing is meant by, "blotting out their names from the book of life," as is meant in the 11th chapter of Rom. by unbelieving and apostate Israel being "broken off" from the true olive as unprofitable branches. And as apostate Israel was not always to abide in unbelief, but be grafted in again, as all Israel, together with the fullness of the gentiles was evidently to be saved, (Rom. xi. 25, 26,) even so those whose names were once blotted from the book of life, shall again be registered in the life-book of the Lamb: "And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," shall sing the song of Moses and the Lamb, "saying, blessing, and honor, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth on the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."—Amen.

THE REPOSITORY.

FOR THE NEW-YORK MIRROR.

THE ADVENTURES OF A NIGHT.

I hear a voice you cannot hear,
Which says, I must not stay;
I see a hand you cannot see,
Which beckons me away.—OLD SONG.

WE belong to that class of persons who believe it to be the duty of every individual to enjoy life as the gift of heaven; and that he who spends his days in innocent cheerfulness, and thankful gratitude, is in possession of the grand panacea for every mortal ill. We have therefore always been more anxious to light up the brow of care with a smile, than to furrow the cheek with unavailing regrets; and would greatly prefer giving the cheek of beauty a richer glow, and deeper dimple, than one tear to the eye, or one sigh to the soft swelling bosom of youth and love. But, to our story.

In my native place there was a church-yard, to which, in the stillly hour of evening, I frequently, when a child, repaired. It was a pleasure to me to decipher the outlandish and quaint rhymes, which undisciplined fancy had dictated for the chisel of the graver to sketch. It was a lonely, silent place. A small brook murmured along at no great distance, as if to deepen the repose of the slumbers—a few trees were scattered about the enclosure, which throw their leafy shadows in the dancing moonlight over the marble tablets—and that most mournful of all sounds, the sighing of the wind through hollow crevices, sometimes rose upon the ear like the wailing of a spirit, unquiet, and unearthly. "The highway that ran along under one wall of the ground, was little frequented after night-fall by the urchins of the neighbourhood, who would make many a weary circuit to avoid the feared enclosure. It is true, we have no recollection that any spectre from the "vasty deep" had ever been seen there—certainly never but once—yet that did not allay the fear, or furnish positive evidence that such ghostly visitants would never rise to revel in the "glimpses of the moon."

About half a mile from this retreat of the dead, lived deacon Adonijah Pettibone, a respectable farmer, and his wife, universally known by the name of Aunt Katy, with their family. Their eldest son, Abimelech Pettibone—for the worthy deacon was a great stickler for scripture names—was about eighteen years of age; and, from Abimelech downwards, there was a regular gradation of no less than fifteen in number; or, as the deacon himself used to express it, a round dozen and a quarter. Abimelech, or, as he was familiarly termed, *Bim*, an appellation which was afterwards slightly changed to *Long Bim*—and in the deacon's family all names were abbreviated as much as possible—was such a lad as does not greet the eye once in half a century. Notwithstanding he frequently complained of being unwell, few could bear longer exposure to the cold storms of November in spearing or snaring the red-finned trout; and not one of the numerous rascals of Pettibones made more extensive or daring excursions into the territories of the pan of pudding and molasses that usually graced the centre of the supper-table. In fact, so rapid had been his growth, that, when his stature and acquisitions were taken into consideration, and compared, some of the neighbours were graceless enough to hint, that Abimelech had outgrown his senses! He had shot up like a mushroom, as it were, in a night; six feet two inches tall, weak, and spindling—a thing to waver in every breeze. Still there was nothing pale about Abimelech—on the contrary, his face was as red as a Spitzbergen, and his nose—I think I see it still!—with what a glorious and bold projection it left the centre of his face, and launched into the regions of space!

and its red tip!—but with that I shall not meddle, lest I should be involved in the accusation of building "lighthouses in the sky!"

Of all the beings that people sea, earth, or air, Abimelech was about the last I should have supposed Cupid would have aimed an arrow at; and certainly the one I should have selected as invulnerable to every thing that did not come in the substantial form of something to eat and drink. But the little god frequently baffles the calculations of mortals, and from the corner of Amelia Egerton's blue eyes gave tall Abimelech such a shot in his left side, that his blood went thrilling to his fingers' ends. For once he forgot every thing but Amelia—he lay awake one whole night—not to perpetrate a sonnet, for he had never heard of such a thing—not to commit a love-letter—for writing, according to the confession of the deacon himself, Abimelech hated as bad as he did a stint in his allowance of hominy—but in endeavouring to devise some way of letting Amelia know what a pit-a-pat state his heart was in on her account. No expedient, however, could he devise, short of going in his proper person to explain the exact state of the business to her.

For once the sickle dame Fortune snickered on Abimelech; for, on the very day in which he resolved to make the desperate attempt of unfolding his mind to her, a lecture was appointed at the village school-house, where elder Maintext sometimes held forth, to the great edification of the youths and damsels of the vicinity. Amelia Egerton was sure to be there, and Abimelech—to use an expressive phrase—determined to *hook on*, after the evening service was closed. Though the son of a deacon, Abimelech was not in the habit of often attending meeting, and it was not without various surmises, and sundry sly winks, that the congregation beheld Long Bim, in his best "bib and tucker," enter, and take his seat where he could command a full view of the double tier of lasses that decorated one side of the building.

We happened ourselves to be present that evening, and found no great difficulty in ascertaining the fair one whom he had resolved to attack when the meeting should break up, for his glances slid most gracefully along his nose towards the point of attraction, and that member certainly gave him the means of directing and aiming them with great effect.

It has always been a subject of regret with us, that we had not, at that time, possessed ourselves of the art of writing short-hand, as the elder, that evening, made one of his happiest and most splendid efforts—so at least his admirers were unanimous in declaring—and the oblivious finger of time has blotted it almost from our recollection. The subject of elder Maintext's discourse was that passage in the Acts of the Apostles, where, at Lystra, the priest of Jupiter brought oxen, and sheep, and garlands, to sacrifice to Paul and Barnabas. After a sublime peroration, in the course of which he gratefully acknowledged the goodness of heaven, "which had permitted them once more to congregate into an aggregate mass"—he proceeded to ascertain what was to be understood by "garlands;" and after a somewhat elaborate argument, pro and con, came to the conclusion, that it meant something edible!—though he had the candour to assure us "that he had in vain searched sacred and profane history for a distinct and satisfactory elucidation of its meaning."

When the benediction had been pronounced, Abimelech erected himself on his walkers—most deliberately and consequently placed a new pair of beavers on his hands—but such was the length of his arm, that they were not within speaking distance of the cuff of his coat—and then marched to the door, by the outer side of which he planted himself to wait for the fair Amelia. Soon she came tripping along, all life and gayety; her fairy form displayed by her dress in

its beautiful symmetry, her unconfined hair flowing in curling ringlets around her neck and bosom—when she suddenly found her course arrested by Long Bim, who stooped to speak to her. Thus compelled to listen, he whispered something in her ear—what it was we know not—but his speech was closed with a sigh, as long drawn and slender as himself. What Miss Egerton's feelings were we could only conjecture from the haste with which she drew her veil over her face, to hide the blushes—we suppose—with which this unexpected honour was covering her features.—Nothing, however, was said; but she accepted his arm, and Abimelech marched off with his prize.

The sun had set beautifully; but, in the course of the evening, a cloud had risen, and a thick fine rain was falling; while the moon was seen only at intervals, and seemed plunging and wallowing through the drifting masses that obscured her rays. Abimelech, with whom all ideas of time and space seemed to have been annihilated, or rather mingled in undistinguishable confusion by his success, walked for some distance without speaking, the fair Amelia tripping, or rather running by his side, to keep pace with his unpolite strides. He at last ventured to utter—

"A very pleasant evening, Miss Egerton."

"You mean the evening *was* a pleasant one," answered the soft voice of Amelia. "This rain I do not consider agreeable or pleasant."

This unfortunate blunder sealed up Abimelech's mouth for a considerable length of time; but the smothered fire that was raging within would not suffer him to rest.

"If Miss Egerton"—he managed to say, but half astonished at his presumption, stopped as short as the young bantling, whose attempt at a crow is incontinently broken off when in mid volley, by the thrown hat of some mischievous urchin. Amelia waited with exemplary patience—but still it stuck in his throat. He swallowed thrice, and began again—

"If Miss Egerton is at liberty"—but could get no further.

"She cannot consider herself so, until she is at home," answered the sprightly Amelia to his half uttered query, in a tone that showed she knew and enjoyed his embarrassment.

They were now within a stone's throw of Mr. Egerton's mansion, and the sensation of desperate necessity operated with magical effect on Abimelech; and, making a great effort, he articulated—

"If Miss Egerton is at liberty, I should be happy to spend an hour or two with her this evening."

"Very well done, Mr. Pettibone," said the half-laughing Miss Egerton—"If I could have guessed what you wished to say, I might have saved you some trouble; for I regret to inform you, that circumstances render a compliance with your request impossible."

"But, my dear Amelia," urged Abimelech, gathering fresh courage, now that the ice was broken, "you cannot know what a frustration my heart is in, or you would not deny me—I have thought of nothing but you these two days!"

"I beg your pardon for occasioning you so much anxiety, and for such a length of time," answered Miss Egerton—"you will do me the justice to believe it was wholly unexpected, and unwished for on my part."

Abimelech was confounded at this sudden termination of his high-wrought hopes; he made a second attempt to soften her obdurate heart, but with no better success. They were at the door, and, refusing the invitation, which in courtesy she gave him to enter the dwelling, she bade him good evening; and, muttering something about the scornful hussy—and drowning himself—stood, for some moments, the very image of despair.

This mood, however, did not last long—the spirit of the Pettibones was roused, and, vowing vengeance

on all and sundry, he turned his steps towards home. The rain had ceased, but the fleecy clouds, in broken masses, rolled over the moon; and the flitting, transitory gleam, silvered meadow, and lake, and woodland. Unluckily for the continuance of this valorous mood, the path Abimelech was compelled to travel was the one we have mentioned as leading by that dreaded spot, the burial ground. So deeply, however, was he immersed in the contemplation of the injury he had received from the lovely Amelia, that he had reached the brow of the little eminence that overlooked the enclosure, before the terrors of the place occurred to his mind; and the white monuments, looming through the gloom, had the effect of recalling his senses, which had so long been wandering.

To speak the truth, Abimelech's courage was as slender as his form; though we shall do him no more than justice, if we admit that his courage would probably have risen, had the undefinable objects that filled him with fear been embodied; as then some reliance might have been placed on a pair of legs, which, for a short race, were able to do good service. But what would flight avail against the thought-like swiftness of those pokerish beings that haunt the suburbs of the grave, and linger around the half-way house between time and eternity? Abimelech had been brought up in the belief of all manner of supernatural appearances; his dreams were continually filled with the most frightful imagery, and he kept a "stud of nightmares" expressly for his own use.

For a minute he meditated a retreat; but then to go back, he recollected, would be nearly as dangerous as to go forward; and he advanced. He tried to recollect the legend of some song, which might serve to keep up his spirits, and had actually proceeded as far as the fifth stave of Nancy Dawson, when his voice faltered—the sounds stuck in his throat, and his tongue was fixed to the dry roof of his mouth.

"This will never do," said Abimelech: "apparitions will never flee for a foolish song; they must have something more serious;" and he uplifted—

"Hark from the tombs a doleful sound,"

to the melodious air of New Durham, with all the power of his lungs.

He was now nearly opposite the middle of the burial ground, and the melody of the first line was gradually sinking away in midnight echoes, when the dark cloud which covered the moon floated away; and notwithstanding his resolution not to look that way, he saw, by the bright gleam, an apparition standing in all its shadowy and indistinct fearfulness on a new made grave, a few paces from the wall. The moment Abimelech's eyes rested on the figure, his tune was abruptly closed; but the melody was instantly taken up, and echoed back in the most unearthly and frightful sounds that mortal can imagine.

"It's the wailing of a spirit!" exclaimed Abimelech, in accents of terror.—His hair rose on his head like bristles, the cold chills ran to his fingers' ends, and, attempting to fly, his knees refused their support, and he sunk upon the earth as an involuntary cry for mercy escaped his lips.

Gentle reader, Abimelech, though not without his failings, was never, to our knowledge, accused of shooting with the long bow; and until a man has been convicted of falsehood, we always take it for granted he speaks the truth. To us it is evident Abimelech saw something unnaturally frightful.

The little mound on which the spectro appeared to Pettibone, was made of the green turfs which had a few days before been piled over the lifeless remains of a worthy man, who had long lived in the vicinity. Walter Mitchell, for that was his name, was a man universally respected as a quiet, sober, industrious citizen, and far from being one that would have been suspected of any such freaks after his demise. There-

are some men so restless, so unprincipled, so dissatisfied with every thing, that doubts as to their remaining quiet, even in their graves, may be considered as justified—but Walter was not one of these. Walter was a man of few words, for he had a most invincible impediment in his speech, and it was frequently with the greatest difficulty that he articulated a syllable. On such occasions it was painful to a spectator to see or hear him—his gesticulations were violent—his hands would be raised high on each side of his head, and he would continue to repeat the first letter, or syllable, of the word he wished to utter, until his breath was spent, or the word pronounced. Precisely similar, in every respect, did the apparition appear; its hands were erected, and the deep interjection, "Ah hah! ah hah!" as it attempted to pronounce the name of Abimelech, was uttered as he had heard it done by Walter a thousand times. It was impossible to mistake, and no one could be mistaken in so plain a case. It is true the sounds were rather more guttural, deep drawn, and hollow, than had been wont with Walter, but Abimelech readily accounted for that to his own satisfaction, by admitting that it was impossible for any thing to lie in the damp ground a fortnight without becoming hoarse.

No sooner had the first salutation, which had well nigh produced such fatal effects on Abimelech, died away, than he ventured to raise his head; and while all around was perfectly silent, he perceived the figure retained its position and appearance. Encouraged at finding it did not advance, he gradually recovered his feet, and cautiously slipping his right foot forward, he at last found himself in a condition to give a spring.

"If they would only keep to their legs, and let their wings alone," muttered Abimelech, half aloud, "I would bet a gallon of black-strap with any of them, that Bim Pettibone would now stand them a pull;" and, mustering all his courage, off he bounded like a wild deer.

Scarcely had he gained ten leaps before the dreadful "Ah hah!—ah hah!"—rang in his ears, and, as he thought, close to his heels. From that time till he stood at his father's door, he heard nothing—he remembered nothing—and whether he ran, walked, or was carried, he knew not. He only had a dim remembrance of a flapping of wings, and the rapid pattering of light feet behind him. The flapping of wings some inconsiderate persons were foolish enough to attribute to his rapid transit through a flock of geese, who, with their bills under their feathers, were quietly sleeping around a spring by the road-side; but Abimelech steadily affirmed it was wholly false.

Abimelech burst into his father's house with the rapidity of a twenty-four pound shot. The family had all retired to their beds, except aunt Katy, good soul! to whom Bim had always been a kind of pet; and who, from certain appearances and preparations, more than half suspected his intentions, and was awaiting his return with a large powder plate of her best pudding and molasses.

"For heaven's sake, Bim, what is the matter?" exclaimed the good woman, as he made his appearance, pale as the phantom which his imagination pictured at his heels.

Abimelech could only articulate "Walter Mitchell;" and, after an interval in which aunt Katy's curiosity was raised to the utmost, added the word "ghost!" and sunk almost breathless into a chair.

"Adonijah! Adonijah!" exclaimed the shrill notes of the deacon's help meet, "get up in a moment!"—and, without waiting for an answer, in an instant her sharp voice was heard at the foot of the chamber stairs—"Ben! Jo! Eli!—come down quick, for Bim has seen a ghost."

"I guessed he would when he went away," answered Joseph drily, and covered up his head;—but

Benjamin and Elijah obeyed the summons, and, with their father and mother, were soon standing around the terrified Abimelech.

"Take your own time, my son," said the worthy deacon, "and let us know the whole."

Not so patient, however, was aunt Katy; she plied question on question, without waiting to take breath:

"Had it wings?—was it in white?—what form had it?—did it attempt to speak?—what did it say?—did it stammer?"

"Stammered like the d—!" was the only answer Abimelech could give to this torrent of interrogatives from his mother.

"Abimelech is deranged," groaned the good woman, as she staggered back against the wall; for it was the first time she had ever heard such an unadvised expression issue from his lips.

"It was a sudden suggestion of the adversary," answered the deacon; and Abimelech, who had now recovered his breath, gave a circumstantial account of the whole affair.

"Poor soul!" said aunt Katy, as Bim finished his narration; "I fancied it would go ill with him after his death; he would never go to hear elder Maintext."

"But you forget that Walter Mitchell was a punctual and devout attendant at his place of worship, and I must believe was a good man," replied the more charitable Adonijah.

The result of the conference was, a resolution on the part of the deacon that he and his sons should immediately repair to the spot; but they finally listened to the suggestions of aunt Katy, and postponed the examination until morning.

"There was no telling," she said, "what apparitions might do, if disturbed in their nightly visits;" and after Abimelech had emptied the platter, the family adjourned to their usual places of rest.

Early in the morning Adonijah arose, and taking Bim and Ben with him, repaired to the haunted enclosure. Jo used to say that the deacon put a small prayer-book in his pocket as a safeguard; but, in such matters, his word never went as far as Abimelech's, who affirmed the contrary.

There were a few beautiful white clouds piled up far away in the east, on the upper margin of which was a brilliant golden streak; and though the sun had not yet risen above the clouds, the purple and violet that preceded his coming were mingled in all their streaming richness and glory. Abimelech's heart fluttered as they approached the place; he felt certain nondescript sensations, as the white monuments began to appear—nor were they lessened when they reached the enclosure; and, half concealed behind the wild roses which some fond hand had planted, he discovered the object of his terrors.

"Oh dad! there it is, there it is!—the very same apparition I saw last night. They need never tell me after this that ghosts vanish at the crowing of the cock!" cried Abimelech, in unaffected terror.

"Where?—where?"—hastily inquired Adonijah, at the same time fumbling in his pocket.

"There!" answered Abimelech, pointing with his finger; "there, behind the rose bushes where Lucy Tuttle was buried."

Adonijah looked—rubbed his eyes—looked again—and burst into a hearty and unrestrained fit of laughter:

"Bim, you fool, that's a mule!"

"A mule!" echoed Bim.

"A mule!" echoed Ben.

"Ah hah!—ah hah!"—echoed donkey in his turn.

The mystery was speedily solved. The proprietor of the farm on which the burial ground was located, had the day before purchased a mule, and as that enclosure was furnished with a good wall, he had, to ensure his safe keeping for the night, placed him in it. Abimelech had never seen or heard one; and

standing as it happened to do with its fore feet on Walter's grave, its ears elevated in the moonlight formed no bad representation of Walter's raised hands when speaking; and a clearer head than Abimelech possessed, might have been pardoned in mistaking its braying for the unearthly sounds of a stuttering ghost.

The creature would probably have remained quiet, and suffered Abimelech to pass undisturbed, had it not been roused by his essay on New Durham; and, justly offended at the abrupt manner in which the first line was closed, lent his own sonorous and emphatic notes as a chorus.

The remainder of the night's adventure needs no explanation, and we close this authentic narrative by remarking, that Abimelech was never suffered to forget the incidents of his first essay at courtship—and that the fright he then received, completely cured him of the *pantodissimo* he felt for the bewitching Amelia Egerton.